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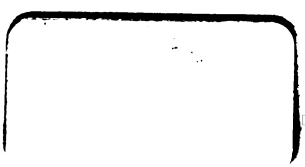

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BOOKS AND THINGS

BY

PHILIP LITTELL

NEW YORK
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1919

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My thanks are due to the other editors of "The New Republic" for letting me print and reprint the following articles

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BOOKS AND THINGS

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SARGENT'S WILSON

AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

HE is leaning forward a little, with an arm on each arm of his chair. Neither hand is quite resigned to the situation, quite given up to the moment. In the left one, especially, we discover an impatience which we find again, somewhat more faded or more under control, in his face. These visitors whom we do not see, whom the painter has put us in the place of, did not this professor understand several minutes ago everything they could have to say to him? Of course he did. His mind is fleeter of foot than their minds. Now he is ready to have them go, he is more than ready to turn his chair again to the table, where his documents are and his heart is. Matter printed or typewritten is so much more orderly and informing, so much less an interruption, than words hot in the mouths of flesh and blood intruders.

What is he professor of? No narrow spe-

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cialty, surely. Those eyes, hard and cold although they can stare, on occasion, are evidently accustomed to liberal prospects. A habit of speaking to a listening world, from that part of his intellect which most resembles his heart, has saved his didactic lips from any such look of petulance as blind nature half intended them to wear. Perhaps his specialty is the future. Yes, that must be it. Mr. Sargent has shown us a Professor of the Future, whom a delegation from the present, the coarse present in which things are every day either done or left undone, has interrupted. When the present has picked up its hat and bowed itself out he will be relieved to be left alone again with the future.

JANUARY, 1918.

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A LITTLE FLAG

PRESIDENT WILSON'S speech on Flag Day gave me two surprises. It revealed a likeness I had never suspected between the President's thinking and Mr. G. K. Chesterton's. "There are no days of special patriotism," says the President. "There are no days when you should be more patriotic than other days." A few sentences later the same thought is repeated in a slightly different form: "I am sorry that you do not wear a little flag of the Union every day instead of some days." Clearly the teaching of these two passages taken together is that Flag Day should not come once a year, but that every day should be Flag Day. Mr. Chesterton, in an essay called "Some Damnable Errors About Christmas," deals after this fashion with the second of the more obvious fallacies which the day has occasioned: "I refer to the belief that 'Christmas comes but once a year.' Perhaps it does, according to the calendar—a quaint and interesting compilation, but of little or no practical value to anybody. It is not the

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calendar, but the spirit of man that regulates the recurrence of feasts and fasts. Spiritually, Christmas Day recurs exactly seven times a week. When we have frankly acknowledged this, and acted on this, we shall begin to realize the Day's mystical and terrific beauty. For it is only every-day things that reveal themselves to us in all their wonder and their splendor. A man who happens one day to be knocked down by a motor-bus merely utters a curse and instructs his solicitor, but a man who has been knocked down by a motor-bus every day of the year will have begun to feel that he is taking part in an august and soul-cleansing ritual."

Later in the same essay, involuntarily contributed to Mr. Max Beerbohm's "Christmas Garland," Mr. Chesterton says that "what is right as regards Christmas is right as regards all other so-called anniversaries." Whether President Wilson would go as far as this I cannot know until I have collated his speeches on the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter Day, Saint Patrick's Day and Memorial Day. This I hope to do when the opportunities have presented themselves. If his thinking prove consistent and if his advice be

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followed, the heart of America will lose some of that monotony which hostile critics have imputed to it. You will readily allow me this prophecy if you suffer me to complete my quotation from President Wilson. "I am sorry," he said, "that you do not wear a little flag of the Union every day instead of some days, and I can only ask you, if you lose the physical emblem, to be sure that you wear it in your heart, that the heart of America shall interpret the heart of the world." And so it may come about, if what is right as regards Flag Day is right as regards all other so-called anniversaries, that you will wear every day in your heart a little flag of the Union, a wreath of holly and a spray of shamrock. Every day instead of some days your heart will hold an Easter Egg in one hand and in the other, unless you incline to a safe and sane Fourth, a fire-cracker. Does a heart so profusely and variously decorated seem to you like a heart decorated against itself? No matter. Too quick despairer, be not discouraged. Learn to embellish your heart by adding now and then a fresh little physical emblem to its furniture.

Surprise number two was the discovery that

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I did not really understand President Wilson's meaning. Here, in a writer notably perspicuous, were simple words simply arranged, yet baffling somehow, and so subtly! This surprise did not stay. I put it to flight by recalling a sentence from William Blake: "Nor is it possible to thought a greater than itself to know." Knowing, however, that we progress by attempting the impossible, I did not give over the attempt to master the President's thought, but kept on striving, striving, until finally something lightened the darkness—a suspicion that President Wilson, when he appeared to say he was sorry we Americans did not wear a little flag as frequently as we now wear skirts or trousers, didn't intend to be taken literally. What he would have us acquire is the high-motive habit. Many of us go through life without feeling patriotic more than a very few times. It is not patriotism which wars every morning against sluggishness, conquers it and yanks you out of bed. It is not patriotism which at breakfast leads you to reject that extra, ultimate, torporific griddle-cake, nor is it patriotism which lands you at the station in time to catch the 7:51 for the city. Not by reference to a

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patriotism conscious of itself can we explain Mr. T. Cobb's batting average.

This condition of things is one that President Wilson would gladly change. For an America in which men do their day's work from many and various and specialized motives he would substitute an America in which work is done from motives fewer and nobler. He believes that work is likely to be better done if the worker's motive is high. In President Wilson's mind human motives are arranged in a hierarchy, with patriotism near the top. To him the world would be not only a more admirable but a more interesting place if all men could acquire the habit of looking about them, selecting the highest motive in sight, and then acting on it. To his mind there would be something congenial in the spectacle of such order and simplicity and uniform highmindedness. Such a world would at least be very unlike the existing world. It would be a little like a world of Woodrow Wilsons. For President Wilson is one of those exceptional men who act seldom upon impulse and mostly upon high motives carefully chosen. This consciousness of high motives is one explanation of his courage and

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his tenacity. When you are thoroughly convinced that your motives are right it is easier to believe that they must be impelling you along the right track.

Now, having got what I can out of the Flag Day speech, I wonder how I could ever have thought it just a series of highminded, unmeaning words. In appearance it is this, to be sure, but in reality it is self-revelation. "Save me, O Lord, from pumping into myself every morning feelings which can in me be sincere only by accident or on a special occasion." The man who made that prayer does not resemble Mr. Wilson. To keep company with high motives is part of the President's daily life. They do not lose their power over him. With them he goes up to the high places where he makes his lonely decisions, and to their voices he listens. Every day he invites them to his table, the same guests always—Patriotism, Humanity, Justice, Duty and the others. Their host knows how to put these abstractions at their ease by making them feel that he is one of themselves. The table talk would have shocked Horace Walpole. Such words as "sacred" and "solemnize" are heard oftener than the taste of the eighteenth

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century would have approved. There is a sudden hush at the table. The host is speaking, "When I think of the flag," he says, "it seems to me I see alternate stripes of parchment upon which are written the rights of liberty and justice, and stripes of blood spilt to vindicate those rights, and then, in the corner, a prediction of the blue serene into which every nation may swim which stands for these great things." Nor do Patriotism, Justice, Humanity and Duty see anything to criticize in their friend's rhetoric.

JUNE, 1915.

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PROVIDENCE THE WISE

MOST of the men I know best voted last autumn for President Wilson. Most of them did it after a good deal of hesitation, did it recalcitrantly, biased by reading and meditating the speeches of Mr. Hughes. Nearly all, however, admired Mr. Wilson's addresses of February third and April second, although they would have liked them better yet if the President had said "duty" instead of "plain duty," "frankly" instead of "very frankly," and if he had not said "proud punctilio." These exceptions made, the speeches Mr. Wilson has lately been delivering do not arride these friends of mine, who are punctilious without being proudly punctilious, and meticulous not without being morbidly meticulous. Some of them read him with pain, others with a pleasure not free from malice.

Attempts to explain their state of mind are all the harder for me because it resembles my own. I am talking, of course, about those men who are in nowise malicious. You suggest, per-

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haps, that each of them had in childhood an experience which predisposed him to distaste for Mr. Wilson's recent speeches? Yes, that is possible, certainly possible. I should not care, by calling it impossible, to range myself with those who go up and down the world always denying that the improbable has occurred. But is not the matter easier of access on the other side? Instead of trying to guess what Mr. Wilson's mind is like by exploring their feeling about it, why not try to get at their feeling by taking a look at a bit of his mind?

Let us choose, for this purpose, a passage where the substance attracts more attention than the words. Or else, if we are so unhappily constituted that such a passage is not so easy to find, let us disregard our sorrow that the President's vocabulary has lost so few female adjectives since the United States went to war, that the adjective is still the enemy of the executive.

Perhaps this extract will do—from the address Mr. Wilson made last week to the United Confederate Veterans: "These are days of oblivion as well as of memory; for we are forgetting the things that once held us asunder.

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Not only that, but they are days of rejoicing, because we now at last see why this great nation was kept united, for we are beginning to see the great world purpose which it was meant to serve. Many men, I know, particularly of your own generation, have wondered at some of the dealings of Providence, but the wise heart never questions the dealings of Providence, because the great, long plan as it unfolds has a majesty about it and a definiteness of purpose, an elevation of ideal, which we were incapable of conceiving as we tried to work things out with our own short sight and weak strength." And again, a few sentences later: "At the day of our greatest division there was one common passion among us, and that was the passion for human freedom. We did not know that God was working out in His own way the method by which we should best serve human freedom—by making this nation a great, united, indivisible, indestructible instrument in His hands for the accomplishment of these great things."

Such a passage is not the work of a mind for which a main attraction in difficult subjects is their difficulty. The doubt Mr. Wilson hoped to soothe is found tossing on its bed, with a tem-

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perature as high as ever, when he has finished his lullaby. His words are a soft answer to a hard question.

Even comparatively simple questions are answered here with uncostly ease. Are we quite so certain, if we impute to Providence, as Its motive for deciding our civil war as It decided it, a desire to keep the United States united for military use in the present war, are we quite certain that the means were adapted to this end? Suppose the South had split itself off from the North, suppose each of these two nations, afraid of the other, had treated itself to a large standing army. Suppose, finally, that the passion for making and keeping the world safe for democracy had burst upon these two nations at about the same time, and had risen high enough to wash each beyond fear of the other, and had swept both into this war. Might not the result have been that the southern states and the northern states would be less unready to-day for war than the United States is? This is not a certainty. Of course it isn't. It is a doubt which the President has called into being by his own freedom from doubt.

Our fathers have told us that some minds seek

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by preference the central difficulty of every subject they attack. Other minds decline to see even the difficulties that are posted conspicuously upon the subject's circumference, like sentinels on its outer walls. We should have to put Mr. Wilson into this second class, I am afraid, if we were to judge him by nothing but what he said to the Confederate Veterans about Providence.

Don't question the dealings of Providence, he advised the Confederate Veterans. Wait until you can see in these dealings majesty, elevation of ideal, definiteness of purpose. Then approve. "The wise heart never questions the dealings of Providence."

But this advice, as I discover by trying to follow it, makes me the judge of an ideal's elevation and the definiteness of a purpose, me the appraiser of majesty. I may not like such an arrangement. I may happen to require, no matter how well I think of myself, a criterion more objective than my uncertain and fitful power to recognize these things when I see them. As a judge of God's purposes I leave something to be desired. Had I been addressing the Confederate Veterans, say in late 1914

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or early 1915, I might have said to them, out of my blindness: "God kept the United States one nation so that it might serve, throughout this world upheaval with whose causes we have no concern, to remind the warring nations how beautiful and lofty that nation is which preserves and values the blessings of peace. By God's help united we stand," so I might have told my hearers, "and, in strict accordance with His design, united we stand out of this war." And to-day, seeing my error, now when the great, long plan has been further unfolded, I should perhaps be regretting that I had so publicly misjudged the purposes of God.

President Wilson seems to imply that our later estimates of the dealings of Providence are always sounder than our earlier estimates. This, we may remember, was almost Monsieur d'Astarac's opinion of Providence's estimates of Itself. On an island in the Seine, one moonlit evening, he said to Jaques Tournebroche, who had left La Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédauque to enter his service:

"One cannot reproach Jehovah with having deceived himself as to the quality of his work. Although he saw that it was good, at the very

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first and in the ardor of composition, he was not slow to realize his mistake, and the Bible is filled with expressions of his dissatisfaction, which amounted often to ill-humor and even at times to anger. Never did artisan treat the products of his industry with more disgust and aversion. He even thought of destroying them, and as a matter of fact he did drown all except a few."

JUNE, 1917.

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THE IDEAL CAMPAIGNER

NEITHER from his rather unusual name, which is Mullinub, nor from his good average face, which is red and round and optimistic, would you be likely to guess his tastes, which are all for cubism in plastic art, and in verse for Mallarmé and Edward Lear.

So you will readily understand that I, who have long known his likings, was surprised when he greeted me the other day with these words: "This campaign that Hughes is making is rather disappointing." Shielding my eyes from the pictures which ruin his walls I determined to improve the occasion. In a man like Mullinub serious interests should be encouraged.

"You say well," I began. "There has been no disappointment like Mr. Hughes's campaign in my time. The hope which I took with me to his notification meeting died there before the evening was over. It did not want to die. Fed on rumors and hearsay for dessert, with faith and my desires as its staple food, it had grown

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marvelously throughout its short life. It was conceived when Mr. Hughes's success at Chicago began to look certain, it was born on the day of his nomination, it died before he had finished his first speech. For I had hoped that Mr. Hughes, supplied by God or nature with a stronger brain than any other Republican possibility except Mr. Root, would tell me quite plainly what ought to have been the conduct of the United States since the outbreak of the war, would outline in large firm strokes an American policy, would separate the risks avoided by such a policy from those other risks which he would be willing to face and for which it was our business to prepare.

"Yes, I acknowledge that I had such a hope. I did imagine once upon a time that Mr. Hughes was a stilled fountain of pure wisdom, eager for a chance to play. Like many hundred thousand Americans I had been perplexed in the extreme by the war. I longed for a leader who could see our American goal, our way to it, and the difficulties and dangers on our way. Well, Mr. Hughes has been doing his best to convince us all that such a picture had not the merit of likeness. It was the work of a painter

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who had dipped his brush in his wishes. Call no man wise until he has broken silence."

Mullinub's face, while I was speaking my piece, changed from surprise, which it expresses easily, to disappointment, which it expresses with effort and in spite of obstacles.

"I don't understand what you're driving at," he said. "What do you expect from a campaign, anyway?"

"As a citizen," I answered with dignity, "I either want a campaign to result in the doing of certain things or else I want it to teach me what things I want done."

"Oh," said Mullinub. "I get you. So you are still at that stage of development? Perhaps I was just as bad before I grew up. Nowadays I am interested in campaigning as a fine art. Absolute music, absolute painting, absolute poetry, absolute campaigning—these are the things I go in for. In each of these arts I seek the master who can reduce the irrelevant and impertinent interest, the illustrative, representative, informing, practical element, to a minimum. The greatest master would abolish it altogether.

"It was years ago that I had my first glimpse

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of an ideal toward which many candidates strove but which no candidate ever quite attained. It was then that I conceived my white and pure and stainless ideal, then that I first imagined a candidate who would take the stump and stay on it without saying anything about any subject upon which his opinion could conceivably be an occasion of curiosity to any son or daughter of woman.

"Mr. McKinley in his first campaign might have reached this ideal. I still believe he was capable, if only he had had the right trainers and backers, of penetrating deep into the autumn months of 1896 without uttering the word gold—of avoiding this word for as many weeks as Mr. Hughes succeeded in avoiding the word Lusitania. But it was not to be. The gods couldn't see it. Mr. McKinley's trainers and backers would not let him be silent. He passed into the White House with one great possibility of his nature unfulfilled.

"But at Carnegie Hall, where I went sadly, reluctantly, in obedience to major force, I was thrilled by Mr. Hughes's speech. Perhaps I had found my absolute campaigner after all these years of waiting. With trembling hands I took

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out my watch and timed the speaker. Half an hour of Mexico, untainted by any attempt at a clear statement of what he would have done if he had been President. Glorious! Ten minutes about the European war, and never a ray of light. Superb! My heart beat wildly. Perhaps here, before my eyes, where they had never expected to find him, was a candidate who could go through a campaign without saying anything at all!

"It seemed too good to be true and it was too good to be quite true. At the very end of the evening came his fall. He spoke of woman suffrage in words which though not unforgivably clear could nevertheless mean only one thing. Too bad, too bad. And he might so easily have said even upon this subject something that would not have damaged his record for noncommittalness. He might have said, preserving the same attitude toward woman suffrage that he has taken and kept toward so many other questions, that women were entitled both to all their existing legal rights and also to such other rights as might hereafter be given them by either state or federal action.

"In what Mr. Hughes has said about the

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tariff he has been equally untrue to his highest or most noncommittal self. And he could so easily have been true. He had only to say that our tariff laws ought to be framed with wisdom and enforced with firmness, to repeat this over and over, and to say no more about it.

"Still, although he has not attained my ideal, his silence upon the important questions of the campaign has been gratifying, very gratifying. Perhaps he comes as near to being the ideal campaigner, the candidate who says exactly nothing, as imperfect man can come in this imperfect world. I do not count, as things which spoil the technique of silence, what Mr. Hughes has said about President Wilson's appointments to the civil and diplomatic service. While the European war is on, while so many of my inartistic and practical fellow-countrymen are both dissatisfied with our national conduct and unable to say what it ought to have been, discussion of the Durand case, like discussion of the Brown, Jones and Robinson cases, is really a form of silence."

"Then why are you disappointed?" I asked. "He has had least to say about the most important subjects."

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"Because of his slip about the Lusitania. He ought not to have been so definite. He spoke against his will, I admit, and after a wonderful delay, beautifully sustained. But I hope he won't do it again. Somebody in the crowd that heard him is said to have shouted 'you said something!' These words must have made him realize, in bitterness, that he had fallen short of his ideal."

OCTOBER, 1916.

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WHEN THE AUGURS YAWNED

BEING now an old man, and unlikely to live much longer in this world, I think fit to set down before I die certain things which took place forty years ago, in the autumn of 1916, and of which I am the only surviving witness.

My readers may recall that year, by the help of any standard work of reference, as the date of a presidential election in this country, the candidates being a Mr. Wilson, the then incumbent, and a Mr. Hughes. Until the middle of October the campaign had been an affair of good, average momentousness. Each candidate had been trotting with great decency round and round his appointed track. Mr. Wilson's gait was fluent and graceful. Mr. Hughes moved more stiffly and brought his feet down a little harder.

At that time, long before the pure candidate law was enacted or even thought of, any candidate was legally free to say that he contained nothing but undiluted Americanism, and each

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did say so several times. By October such assertions had ceased to thrill and astonish the electorate. I would not, however, wish to convey the impression that the campaign consisted exclusively of repetitions of their faith in Americanism by Mr. Hughes and Mr. Wilson. Mr. Hughes was fond of exciting his hearers by telling them it was not good for a government to vacillate in its policy, and that it was good for a government both in policy and administration to be adequate, consistent and firm. Mr. Wilson was fond of promising that he would omit no word, and it was currently believed that among the words he was least in danger of omitting were humanity, justice, sacred, solemn and very.

Well, the campaign ran along, not very fast, until about the middle of October, when something happened which convinced everybody that each of the two candidates had gone clean off his head.

Mr. Wilson, in a speech delivered at—the name of the town escapes me, but it was within a day's journey of the Mississippi River—Mr. Wilson up and admitted that his administration had made a mistake or two. To be specific,

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says he, I have made mistakes. To be more specific, he says, after I saw that ad that the German Embassy put in the papers, I wish I had held the Lusitania at her pier until I had asked the German Embassy what about it. To keep on being specific, he says, I now think that piece I spoke about being too proud to fight was in the circumstances a damned silly thing to say. I ought to have known how people would take it. This is wisdom after the event, if you like, but it is better to be wise after the event than to be foolish all the time.

This was bad enough, of course. No candidate in the United States, since the time when Endicott Winthrop Adams first ran for reëlection as hog-reeve in the suburbs of Plymouth, Mass., had ever admitted that he did wrong. And this was only half the scandal. On the very night when Mr. Wilson touched off this bomb, Mr. Hughes, speaking at another town within a day's journey of the Mississippi, up and admits that Mr. Wilson since he took office had once or twice spoken and acted like a grown man in his right mind. And anyhow, Mr. Hughes says in substance, the President has had one hell of a problem on his hands. "I am not prepared

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to deny," he says in substance and in part, "that if Mr. Wilson had done just after the Lusitania what he did just after the Sussex, and if the result had been a state of war between us and Germany, I am, I say, in a condition of unpreparedness to deny that the great undiluted mass of the American people, barring a few Easterners who live near the effete, patrician sea-coast, might not have liked it so well as they like what has actually occurred. Peace with honor was the first demand of the great American nation, but most of us, if we couldn't have peace with honor, were willing to compromise on peace with Germany."

Men who are still alive remember the pandemonium or row that came next. The campaign stopped as if it had been shot. For twenty-four hours the candidates could not move hand, foot or eyelid. They had to be dug out of the landslide of protesting telegrams with steam-shovels.

These telegrams taught Mr. Hughes and Mr. Wilson a thing or two. From that momentous moment neither of them had a good word for the other. Each candidate did his duty in that station of life into which it had pleased his con-

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vention to call him. Each said just what he ought to say, which was what everybody knew he would say and had said before.

This ancient history is old. The ancient history I am now about to reveal is new.

Perhaps you noticed that Mr. Hughes made his break within a day's journey of the Mississippi, and Mr. Wilson the same, but you did not notice, because I did not tell you, that these two towns were the same distance from the same place on the Mississippi, viz.: Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. I know, for I had a shack on an island half way between Prairie du Chien and the Iowa coast over opposite.

Well, about a week before the big scandal I heard a motorboat ticking toward my island, with me alone on it, and I went down to the shore, where two gentlemen were disembarking. "Mr. Paley," says one of them, "meet Mr. Herbert Parsons, if I have the name right," and then the other says, "Mr. Paley, I don't think you've met Colonel House." And then the two of them, as we walked up to my place, said could they have the loan of my shack one night next week for a great public purpose?

What purpose? says I, and then it all came

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out. The campaign was slowing up, and these two had got together and decided that if the candidates could meet secretly, face to face, and properly dislike each other's faces, the words they would afterward say would put life and speed and ginger into the campaign. So I named my price for the loan of the shack and the thing was fixed up.

At length the fatal night arrived. First a boat came over from the Iowa shore, grated on the gravel beach, and out stepped Mr. Wilson. Then came a boat from the Wisconsin shore, grated, etc., and out got Mr. Hughes, with an American flag in the buttonhole of his cutaway. He carried no other weapons. Neither did Mr. Wilson.

The boatmen stayed by their respective boats and the candidates met in the main hall of the shack, fourteen by twelve. I withdrew to an adjoining room and listened through the wall and looked.

Mr. Wilson led off. "I see," he says to Mr. Hughes, after smiling once at him, "that you are wearing a little flag of the Union in your buttonhole, and I can only ask you, if you lose this little physical emblem, to be sure that you

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wear it in your heart, that the heart of America shall interpret the heart of the world."

Mr. Hughes looked a little surprised, but he was at no loss for an answer. "We want America first in the mind and heart of every one in this land," he says. "When I say I am an American citizen I ought to say the proudest thing that any man can say in this world. There is one other thought I want to leave with you, and it is this: We are going to see that that is done which we are entitled to have done. There is one other thought I want to leave with you until called for, and it is this. Wherever"—and he glanced reverently down at his buttonhole—"wherever there is an American flag there is a shrine."

Mr. Wilson followed the direction of Mr. Hughes's eyes. "When I think of the flag," says he, "it seems to me I see alternate stripes of parchment on which are written the rights of liberty and justice, and stripes of blood spilt to vindicate those rights."

"I dare say," says Mr. Hughes, "but I want to see splendid policies in this country. There is no such thing as prosperity or success for any particular class. We are not laborers or capi-

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talists in this country. Fellow-citizen, we are fellow-citizens."

For about half an hour I looked and listened, and then voices, loud at first, got lower and lower. When silence fell I stole in to investigate. By saying to each other, the two of them in a room, the very things they had been saying at each other in public, each had put the other to sleep and it was my turn.

When at last the renewed sound of their voices woke me up again I couldn't quite catch their drift. The candidates seemed to have agreed that perhaps they were boring the voters, and that something must be done. If the words of each produced sleep in the other how could the voters be expected to stay awake? Then Mr. Wilson said something about augurs who laughed being better than augurs who yawned and were the cause of yawning. Suddenly both men jumped up. A light played all over Mr. Wilson's face and over those parts of Mr. Hughes's where there was room. "Let's try saying what we think," they shouted together. "That'll shake 'em up." . . .

It did shake 'em up, as I have told you, and as the historians have recorded the scandal.

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From the row caused by Mr. Wilson's and Mr. Hughes's simultaneous bursts of candor, and from the things said in that row, I gathered at the time that if both kept on saying what they really thought neither of them could be elected. Nobody would have been elected President. Fortunately they stopped speaking their minds and somebody was elected, if I recollect rightly. But I am an old man, with an untrustworthy memory, so perhaps you had better consult a work of reference.

AUGUST, 1916.

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"A ROAD TO YESTERDAY"

MORE by design than by accident, a few seasons ago, I missed seeing "The Road to Yesterday." No play, so my argument ran, can live up to such a good title. What ought to be fanciful and irresponsible will probably be sentimental and coldly ingenious. Instead of following a by-path into forgotten memories, instead of hearing whispers from the dawn of life, I shall find myself personally conducted along a highroad into a prettified epoch labelled, somewhat arbitrarily, the past.

Whether I did well to stay away is more than I know, for no one has told me. But ever since the play left New York I've been rather hoping I might chance upon some such road—upon any road to yesterday—before old age closed all roads to to-morrow; and hoping, until just the other day, in vain. Last week I visited yesterday, not quite as I had intended, not casually, but by going deliberately to the Cleveland Memorial Meeting at the New Amsterdam Theatre. The past accumulated about me as

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the audience gathered. It was not such a prettified past as I had been afraid of. These men and women were mostly of my own or of a greater age. They looked high-minded, self-respecting, grave, rather drab. They resembled, if I may raise, for a moment, a disused phrase from the dead, those best thinkers who so abounded in 1884. From their faces you guessed that their minds were coeval with the mind of George William Curtis.

The first of the three speakers whom Mr. Parker introduced was exactly the right man to talk to such an audience. So much was plain before Governor Harmon said a word, and his speech cut the impression deeper. He was thinking not of himself at all, but solely of the dead, of the friend he had loved, of the President who deserved well of both party and country, of Mr. Cleveland as "a commanding and permanent world-figure," destined as time went on to appear "more clearly and sharply, like a mountain seen at a distance after the clouds have rolled away." Like the other speakers, Governor Harmon was more concerned with the size of Mr. Cleveland's character than with its contours. His speech was a little dull, a little

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like a catalogue, recited with piety and feeling, of dried issues and closed questions, a little unreal although quite sincere in its forgetfulness of the fact that there will be many competitors for the attention of posterity.

To convince some of us and to remind others that Mr. Cleveland was a brave man, wise and ruggedly honest—one felt this to be the lonely motive of Governor Harmon's speech. No sense that his words interested you could tempt him to say more than he had come from Ohio to say, no sense that he was not interesting could have made him say less. The other two speakers struck me as not so single-minded. Their wish to do Mr. Cleveland honor was obvious enough, but Mr. McAdoo, not the former Secretary of the Treasury but the chief city magistrate of New York, was as obviously a gifted speech-maker enjoying himself, willing to go on and on, not quite willing to stop, taking too apparent a pleasure in his own unconcern and geniality.

General Leonard Wood's speech left an impression not so easy to describe. His voice, heard just after Mr. McAdoo's and before we had had time to forget Governor Harmon's,

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sounded very New England. It betrayed a youth spent among cultivated persons. His accent, which he learned early and unconsciously, and which is quite natural to him, seemed on this occasion too refined to be quite natural. He struck me as conscious of this refinement, as rather disliking it, as rather afraid that it might be a handicap, and as having made a decision. I could not help imagining General Wood as having said to himself, once upon a time: "There is nothing to be done about my accent. To make it less refined, to try in any way to correct its New Englandism, would be affectation. But I am a soldier as well as a New Englander. May not a soldierly curtness of style lessen the prejudice caused by those marks which my early advantages have left on my accent?" Probably General Wood never said anything like this to himself. I am only supposing, and I put down my guess only because it helps me to explain what I felt while listening to his speech, namely, that his was one of the best essays in military curtness, one of the best deliberate imitations of curtness, that I had ever heard.

Of the three speakers General Wood seemed

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the least disinterested. He too admired President Cleveland, but a wish to do President Cleveland honor was far from being his sole motive. It was accompanied by the obvious, the altogether too obvious, wish to do President Wilson harm. Dislike of President Wilson, determination to seize all the good chances to score off him, dictated too many of General Wood's short, jabbing phrases. Once at least his ill-will toward the living incited him to the oddest mispraise of the dead. President Cleveland, he told us, "was not an adept in the art of verbal massage. He went straight to the point." When General Wood thought of this last sentence he was not thinking of Mr. Cleveland at all, for Mr. Cleveland found it very hard, whenever he took a pen in his hand, to go straight to the point. He hit off, it is true, a few quotable phrases, but they are very few. For the most part his writing is bad. It is solemn, longwinded, inexpressive, padded with the unhappiest circumlocutions. Neither thinking nor writing came easy to Mr. Cleveland. His excellence lay elsewhere—in making decisions and sticking to them.

All observers would agree, I suppose, if they

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were asked to go over the list of Presidents since Lincoln, and to pick out the three who had put into action as President the strongest wills, in choosing Cleveland, Roosevelt and Wilson. Yet you cannot say that the style of any of the three is a strong man's style. None is rich in "rugged maxims hewn from life." President Roosevelt wrote and spoke like a strong man now and again, in spots, but in the mass his style is too wordy, too prolix, too desperately emphatic to be strong. He found expression as much too easy as President Cleveland found it impossible. Something said of another writer by Mr. Charles Whibley is true of President Roosevelt—he seldom "used a sentence if a page would do as well." President Wilson is a conscious artist, in words—which of course President Roosevelt and President Cleveland were not—but strength is not one of the marks at which his art aims. His style is too gracefully conscious of his audience for strength, too sunnily persuasive, too nicely lubricated, too smooth.

The ideal manner for strong-willed Presidents is still to seek. And for presidential candidates who intend to be strong. Were I a Republican, a soldier, and a man with a grievance, and if I

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thought of having a presidential nomination thrust upon me, I believe I'd try to forget my grievance and not to remember too interruptedly, when it came to fashioning my mere style, that I was a soldier. Soldierly curtness is admirable in the Duke of Wellington, to whom it came natural, but the imitation article runs a risk of sounding like General Leonard Wood.

MARCH, 1919.

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BRYAN

EVERY man, people say, gets the interviewer he deserves. It is not true. Few notables have any such luck. In my whole life I've read the perfect interview just once. This was in January, 1895, not long after the first performance of "An Ideal Husband," when the London "Sketch" published Gilbert Burgess's interview with Oscar Wilde. Mr. Burgess was a man who knew the difference between questions and questions. He asked the right ones:

"What are the exact relations between literature and the drama?"

"Exquisitely accidental. That is why I think them so necessary."

"And the exact relation between the actor and the dramatist?"

Mr. Wilde looked at me with a serious expression which changed almost immediately into a smile, as he replied, "Usually a little strained."

"But surely you regard the actor as a creative artist?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Wilde with a touch of pathos in his voice, "terribly creative—terribly creative!"

The interview is republished in the volume called "Decorative Art in America" (Bren-

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tano's, 1906), and is still as fresh as ever, after twenty years. I turned back to it the other day, after reading here and there in two small blue volumes published in 1909, "Speeches of William Jennings Bryan, Revised and Arranged by Himself," and wondering whether Mr. Bryan would ever fall into the ideal interviewer's hands. You, for example, could not interview Mr. Bryan properly, nor could I. We should feel both supercilious and intimidated. The man for the job is somebody who could mediate fearlessly between the remote Bryan period and the present time. Does such a man exist? By accident I have hit upon the right party—Hector Malone. Of Hector his creator has written, in the stage directions to "Man and Superman," that "the engaging freshness of his personality and the dumbfoundering staleness of his culture make it extremely difficult to decide whether he is worth knowing; for whilst his company is undeniably pleasant and enlivening, there is intellectually nothing new to be got out of him." You already perceive a certain affinity between Hector Malone and Mr. Bryan. Now for their unlikeness: When Hector "finds people chattering harmlessly about Anatole

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France and Nietzsche, he devastates them with Matthew Arnold, the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, and even Macaulay."

It is an affair of proportion. As Nietzsche and Anatole France are to Macaulay, Matthew Arnold and the Autocrat, so, in the scale of modernity, are these authors to those with whom Mr. Bryan does his devastating. Mr. Bryan's culture would seem about as dumb-founderingly stale to Hector Malone as Hector's does to a generation fed on Anatole and Nietzsche. Hector is too modern and sophisticated to quote Gray's "Elegy," "The Deserted Village," Tom Moore and William Cullen Bryant. He knows that people don't do such things. But Mr. Bryan does them, and adds other incredibilities. Like Tennyson's brook, Demosthenes has said, Rollin tells us, Muelbach relates an incident, as Plutarch would say—here they are, and more of the same in these two blue volumes. Looking backward, Mr. Bryan quotes "breathes there a man with soul so dead" and "truth crushed to earth." Looking forward, he says that after Alexander and Napoleon "are forgotten, and their achievements

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disappear in the cycle's sweep of years, children will still lisp the name of Jefferson."

The earliest of these speeches and lectures is dated 1881 and the latest 1909. In reality all of them have the same age. They all taste of "das Ewig-gestrige, das Flache." In 1904 Mr. Bryan gives "the reasons which lead me to believe that Christ has fully earned the right to be called The Prince of Peace," and meditates thus upon eggs: "The egg is the most universal of foods and its use dates from the beginning, but what is more mysterious than an egg? . . . We eat eggs, but we cannot explain an egg." From its context in a lecture on "Man," delivered at the Nebraska State University in 1905, and also at Illinois College, I take this: "Ask the mother who holds in her arms her boy, what her ideal is concerning him and she will tell you that she desires that his heart may be so pure that it could be laid upon a pillow and not leave a stain; that his ambition may be so holy that it could be whispered in an angel's ear. . . ."

If there is already too much superciliousness in the world such passages do harm. They do

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good if there is not superciliousness enough. In either case they do good in their context. They and their context have helped thousands upon thousands of Chautauquan early risers to be cheerful and industrious and unselfish and kind. These speeches reveal an incomparable mental unpreparedness to deal with their grave subjects, with the resurrection of the body, the atonement, miracles, inventions, evolution, faith, the soul, the secret of life. With an easy, happy flow the make-believe thought comes out in sincere and shallow sentences, which make one respect Mr. Bryan's good intentions, and admire his sweetness and good will. Thousands of good men and women have grown better on this thin food. Blessed are those who mean well, for they shall be spared the labor of thought.

It sounds patronizing, my attitude, and it is. Although you and I can no more write significantly of life or death than Mr. Bryan can, yet we have a superficial sophistication, we have acquired a suspicion that twaddle exists and may be distinguished from its opposite. Therefore do we smile complacently, in our offensive

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way, when Mr. Bryan sets forth "the reasons which lead me to believe that Christ has fully earned the right to be called The Prince of Peace." Little as we patronized him in 1896, how can we help patronizing Mr. Bryan now when we find him patronizing Christ?

Chronic good will, courage, a capacity for sudden formidableness, an early perception of important discontents, sympathy with the unprivileged average—in this mixture, I suppose, we must seek the explanation of his hold upon his followers. His size and importance were measured at the Baltimore convention in 1912, and again in the following spring, when President Wilson, afraid to leave him outside and hostile, turned him into a third-rate secretary of state and a useful backer of presidential legislation. One likes to imagine him sitting in the state department, mellowed by his popularity, set free from old jealousies, showing an unexpected capacity for team play, frock-coatedly glad-handing and kind-wording a hundred callers a day, always glib and sunny and sincere. Is he a shade more acquisitive than you'd think to find such a very popular hero? Perhaps. Is he, for

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a man with exactly his reputation, a little too smooth, too unrugged, too deficient in homely humor? Why not? In every reputation, however explicable, there is a residuum of mystery. "What," as Mr. Bryan himself says, "is more mysterious than an egg?"

DECEMBER, 1914.

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SOMEWHERE IN HEAVEN

SOMEWHERE in Heaven. January 1, 1918 (delayed in transmission). This afternoon your correspondent finally succeeded, by methods which if divulged would be widely imitated, in obtaining a pass admitting him to the throne room. It is a modern and commodious apartment, with walls on three sides, and a door at one end. Opposite the door is the great white throne, which would perhaps appear monotonous to our terrestrial taste were it not for the sapphires which relieve the whiteness. The fourth wall is missing, thus affording an uninterrupted outlook upon space. By glancing downward and to the left, any one seated on the throne may obtain a commanding view of the created universe. Before the ceremony of the day began I had an opportunity, of which I did not hesitate to avail myself freely, to survey from this infinite height the various worlds below, as they went circling their suns and spinning, with a more private motion, each upon its own little axis. Turning again to the room

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after mastering this prospect, I noticed that except for the throne itself the only furniture was a gramophone, standing near the middle of the floor in a case of jasper.

Conversation with my guide was at this point rendered impossible by the opening of the door, and the entrance of a select yet representative delegation of the heavenly host, which for the most part dispersed itself about the room. One angel, however, took his stand near the gramophone and immediately busied himself with its mechanism. My guide, in answer to my discreet inquiry who this might be, looked surprised. "The Victor Recording Angel, of course," he whispered. "But hush! The ceremony begins." Turning toward the throne, which had been vacant a moment before, I saw the Lord of Creation seated upon it. I had not seen Him come in. Suddenly He was there.

After a little preliminary and melodious praise there was a short silence, which was broken by the Lord of Creation. "From all these competing spheres," He said, with a large gesture toward the universe beneath, "I can, by the aid of my all-seeing eye, select instantaneously, if I choose to do so, the successful candi-

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date. For the moment I do not choose, preferring rather to subject each world in turn to an august scrutiny. By such concessions, made to the prejudices which flourish down there, does intuitive omniscience condescend to dress itself in the garments of that thing which perishable minds call reasoned judgment." He paused, and, after peering down on Creation a while, resumed the golden thread of his discourse: "This formality over, for by what other name shall we call a series of acts of which the only purpose can be to tell the Lord of Creation that which He knew already, and has known since the beginning of years, I proceed to deliver judgment. That one," He continued, pointing with an inerrant finger, "the one upon which the fruit of the tree of knowledge is science, and upon which for three years and a half the main business of science has been destruction and death, that is the worst world in the world."

At this point a lively little fellow, whom I had not noticed among those present, stepped forward into the vacant space near the throne. He was dressed in red, wore horns of an old-fashioned cut, and seemed eager to put in his word. He spoke vehemently with a strong

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German accent, about man, for whom he made the following apology:

> Ein wenig besser würd' er leben
> Hättst du ihm nicht den Schein des Himmelslichts
> nicht gegeben;
> Er nennt's Vernunft und brauchst's allein
> Nur tierischer als jedes Tier zu sein.

Upon the face of the Lord of Creation I seemed to detect an expression of extreme weariness, such as we see upon human faces when a story is related which was old when all its hearers were young. But the Lord, however bored He may have been, did not lay courtesy of manner aside. "It is well said, Mephistopheles," He began, while the little fellow glowed with pleasure, and even sent off a few sparks of the same. "It is well said. I remember thinking so the first time you said it, about a hundred years ago." When the laughter had subsided the Lord went on, in a sterner tone: "This transfer of hell to earth has not taught Mephistopheles any new wisdom. He learns nothing and forgets nothing—least of all his own words."

"Speaking of words," the Lord resumed, after watching Mephistopheles take refuge

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where the heavenly host was densest, "speaking of words reminds me." And He signaled to the Victor Recording Angel, at whose bidding the gramophone began its labors. The records seemed to have been exposed wherever and whenever, in the year 1917, human ineptitude and foolishness had spoken, yet this self-indictment of the human race, however painful to your and its representative, seemed not at all to touch the Lord of Creation. He listened tolerantly at first, as one accustomed to this sort of thing, and after a little His attention wandered. But on a sudden it came back. His countenance darkened and He said imperatively: "Repeat the last record."

These were the words uttered by the gramophone, whose German accent I thought positively indecent: "The year 1917 with its great battles has proved that the German people has in the Lord of Creation an unconditional and avowed ally, on whom it can absolutely rely."

The heavenly host shuddered at the blasphemy and stood at gaze. "Who said this?" asked the Lord of Creation in a dangerous voice. "The Emperor William, Sire, in a

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speech to his second army on the French front, Saturday, December 22, 1917."

Mephistopheles, perceiving a chance still further to incense the Lord, came forward and raised his voice: "William's words, Sire, and it was very nice of him to express such an opinion, I must say." And he added, in what seems to be his favorite language:

> Es ist gar hübsch von einem grossen Herrn
> So menschlich von dem Gotte selbst zu sprechen.

On the Lord's cheek the flush of rage o'ercame the ashen hue of age. "And this of me?" He said. "Before the year 1918 is a year old —but I forget myself. Being slow to anger I will postpone my wrath until I have explained.

"Each man upon earth I have condemned to be born in another's pain and to die in his own. This statement is not literally true, but it is rhetorically, I think, effective, besides being part of that system which I have followed in the natural world, where, in the laws of nature, which are my laws, I have put the case against my character for mercifulness more powerfully than any of my critics has ever put it. I send misery and destruction and death upon the just

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and the unjust. Men are at liberty to draw from this fact whatever inference they please, but woe unto those who draw the wrong inference.

"William has drawn the wrong inference. He has inferred that I am on his side. For years he has shown an increasing inclination to add a fourth party to a perfectly good Trinity. His words either mean that he is increasingly unable to distinguish between himself and me, or they mean nothing. This likeness does not exist. My worst enemies, even when they called me cruel, have seen nothing in my words which resemble either William's egotistic bluster or his arrogant whine.

"Let me quote an author who wrote in that language which is so often heard on the lips of Mephistopheles. It was Schopenhauer who said that the best man is he who makes least distinction between himself and other men. Possibly. But the assertion is by no means so indisputably true as this—that the worst and maddest man is he who sees the least difference between himself and the Lord of Creation."

He stopped for a moment, and then added, in a voice as clear as a winter sky, at sunset after

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a cloudless day, "William's punishment shall be to see himself, before he dies, as I see him. If he can then perceive any likeness between him and me, I shall be surprised. And this, as you all know, would for me be a new experience."

JANUARY, 1918.

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ZEPPELINITIS

MUCH reading of interviews with returning travellers who had almost seen Zeppelins over London, and of wireless messages from other travellers who had come even nearer seeing the great sight, had made me, I suppose, morbidly desirous of escape from a city where other such travellers were presumably at large. However that may be, when Mrs. Watkin asked me to spend Sunday at her place in the country, I broke an old habit and said I'd go. When last I had visited her house she worshipped success in the arts, and her recipe was to have a few successes to talk and a lot of us unsuccessful persons to listen. At that time her aesthetic was easy to understand. "Every great statue," she said, "is set up in a public place. Every great picture brings a high price. Every great book has a large sale. That is what greatness in art means." Her own brand of talk was not in conflict with what she would have called her then creed. She never said a thing was very black. She never said it was as black as the ace

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of spades. She always said it was as black as the proverbial ace of spades. Once I ventured to insinuate that perhaps it would be more nobly new to say "as black as the proverbial ace of proverbial spades," but the suggestion left her at peace with her custom. Well, when I got to her house last week, and had a chance to scrutinize the others, they did not look as if she had chosen them after any particular pattern.

Dinner, however, soon enabled us all to guess the model from which Mrs. Watkin had striven to copy her occasion. I was greatly relishing the conversation of my left-hand neighbor, a large-eyed, wondering-eyed woman, who said little and seemed never to have heard any of the things I usually say when dining out, and who I dare swear would have looked gratefully surprised had I confided to her my discovery that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Before we were far gone with food the attention of this tactful person was torn from me by our hostess, whose voice was heard above the other voices: "Oh, Mr. Slicer, do tell us your experience. I want *all* our friends to hear it." Mr. Slicer, identifiable by the throat-

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clearing look which suffused his bleached, conservative face, was not deaf to her appeal. He had just returned from London, where he had been at the time of the Zeppelin raid, and although he had not himself been so fortunate as to see a Zeppelin, but had merely been a modest witness of the sporting fortitude with which London endured that visitation, the Zeppelin-in-chief had actually been visible to the brother of his daughter's governess. "At the noise of guns," said Mr. Slicer, "we all left the restaurant where we were dining, Mrs. Humphry Ward, George Moore, Asquith, Miss Pankhurst and I, and walked, not ran, into the street, where it was the work of a moment for me to climb a lamp-post, whence I obtained a nearer view of what was going on overhead. Nothing there but blackness." Instinctively I glanced at Mrs. Watkin, upon whose lips the passage of words like "as the proverbial ace of spades" was clearly to be seen. "Of course," Mr. Slicer went on, "I couldn't indefinitely hold my coign of vantage, which I relinquished in favor of Mrs. Humphry Ward, to whom at her laughing request George Moore and I gave a leg up. She remained there a few moments, one foot on

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my shoulder and one on Sir Edward Carson's —she is not a light woman—and then we helped her down, Asquith and I. When I got back to my lodgings in Half-Moon Street I found that the governess's brother, who had been lucky enough to see a Zeppelin, had gone home. I shall not soon forget my experience." This narrative was wonderful to my left-hand neighbor. It made her feel as if she had really been there and seen it all with her own eyes.

Mr. Mullinger, who was the next speaker on Mrs. Watkin's list, and who had returned from Europe on the same boat with Mr. Slicer, had had a different experience. On the evening of the raid he was in a box at the theatre where Guitry, who had run over from Paris, was appearing in the title rôle of *Phèdre,* when the noise of firing was heard above the alexandrines of Racine. "With great presence of mind," so Mr. Mullinger told us, "Guitry came down stage, right, and said in quizzical tone to us: '*Eh bien, chère petite folle et vieux marcheur,* just run up to the roof, will you please, and tell us what it's all about, don't you know.' The Princess and I stood up and answered in the

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same tone, 'Right-o, *mon vieux,*' and were aboard the lift in no time. From the roof we could see nothing, and as it was raining and we had no umbrellas, we of course didn't stay. When we got back I stepped to the front of the box and said: 'The Princess and Mr. Mullinger beg to report that on the roof it is raining rain.' The words were nothing, if you like, but I spoke them just like that, with a twinkle in my eye, and perhaps it was that twinkle which reassured the house and started a roar of laughter. The performance went on as if nothing remarkable had happened. Wonderfully poised, the English." And this narrative, too, was so fortunate as to satisfy my left-hand neighbor. It made her feel as if she had been there herself, and heard all these wonderful things with her own ears.

After that, until near the end of dinner, it was all Zeppelins, and I hope I convey to every one within sound of my voice something of my own patriotic pride in a country whose natives when abroad among foreigners consort so freely and easily with the greatest of these. No discordant note was heard until the very finish, when young

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Puttins, who as everybody knows has not been further from New York than Asbury Park all summer, told us that on the night of the raid he too had been in London, where his only club was the Athenaeum. When the alarm was given he was in the Athenaeum pool with Mr. Hall Caine, in whose company it has for years been his custom to take a good-night swim. "Imagine my alarm," young Puttins continued, "when I saw emerging from the surface of the waters, and not five yards away from the person of my revered master, a slender object which I at once recognized as a miniature periscope. I shouted to my companion. In vain. Too late. A slim fountain spurted fountain-high above the pool, a dull report was heard, and the next instant Mr. Hall Caine had turned turtle and was sinking rapidly by the bow. When dressed I hastened to notify the authorities. The pool was drained by noon of the next day but one. We found nothing except, near the bottom of the pool, the commencement of a tunnel large enough for the ingress and egress of one of those tiny submersibles the credit for inventing which neither Mr. Henry Ford nor Professor Parker ever tires of giving the other.

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I have since had reason to believe that not one swimming-pool in Great Britain is secure against visits from these miniature pests. Indeed, I may say, without naming any names," . . . but at this moment Mrs. Watkin interrupted young Puttins by taking the ladies away. She looked black as the proverbial.

OCTOBER, 1915.

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VERDUN

DURING the past week many of us have waited breathlessly for news from Verdun. The possibility that this time a German army would be thrust deep into the side of France has had fear's power to shake us. Although we wish the Allies to succeed, and although we are not blind to the harm their cause will suffer if the Germans break the French line, yet this larger anxiety has been for the moment put aside by an intenser anxiety for France herself, so exposed and so resolute. We love France as if the country were a person. You may tell us that to care so much where knowledge is so slight is to be sentimental and unrealistic. That may be true. But realism is only one need of the spirit. It is not the sole need. If some of us are right in thinking we have a liking for realism, and if we do not choose to be realistic about France, then it is as plain as platitude that the causes of this choice lie deep, that we make it because we are grateful for pleasures we have really had. Our

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acquaintance with France and the French is imperfect and superficial. Our ignorance is great. But objects quite as imperfectly understood have inspired some of the most genuine affections in history.

No man understands friendship who can explain his choice of friends on merely rational grounds. It is just as hard to explain one's liking for French landscape, which may easily seem insipid to eyes blinded by delight in the gorgeous improbability of the tropics, and in which you miss that sense of something over, of acreage to spare, often given by landscape in the United States. Yet a few springs ago, while we were travelling south from Paris, I wondered how anybody could fail to enjoy a landscape so accessible to man. We went at a gentle pace, according to modern notions, through miles of faint greens turning vivider, following the river along shaded roads, down wide valleys cultivated everywhere, giving one a feeling that everything had long been put to human uses. Everywhere was the touch of orderly, diligent, waste-hating French hands. Then came a welcome breath of the north be-

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fore the real south, when we looked at the high-lying spring snows on the mountains about Grenoble. Through the colored windings of a gorge with no one in it we came out upon windy Provence, into a country of plain and low hills as fine as etching. After all this wind the stillness was very still at Valescure, where we woke up one morning with the Mediterranean light in our eyes.

In almost all this landscape, on the way we had taken from Paris to the Côte d'Azur, there was an economy, a terseness, that made one think of an orderly mind. Knowing so little French, one saw, in the people along the route, who are so different here from there to anybody who quite understands, only the traits common to nearly all, the faces alert with something which is at first almost suspicion, which changes easily into a self-respecting courtesy, and which takes equality as a pleasant matter of course. Being on the move all day, however, and mostly shut up through all this French scenery to the sound of our own voices, one didn't hear enough French, enough of that voluble speech in which every sentence is somehow concise. Perhaps

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this was why our journey, lying mostly through such accessible landscape, left an impression of the inaccessibility of France? This illusion did not survive a return to Paris, where French speech flooded in again as one did the usual pleasant things. It is because one understands French so ill, and speaks it worse, that the French seem inaccessible when one is among them, remote in their long tradition and their present habit. In the country one is brought to think of this tradition by the many signs of that long patience which has had its way with the soil. Here in Paris it is the older streets, the narrow passages below crenellated towers, that waken sleeping memories, that give one a sense of tradition, of time, of a country which has been great for so many years.

The interest on these visits to France, although when I am there I am conscious of the isolating power of an inaccurate ear and a stumbling tongue, is paid when I get home again and take up a French book. I hear French voices as I read, and some of them are so kind as to speak now and then with a French accent. My eye remembers too, after its fash-

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ion, and my pleasure in reading is heightened by this presence of a visible and audible world. The very journey which made me realize the inaccessibility of France now makes French books more accessible than they had been. Somewhere in this universe I sit and read. What is this universe? "C'est une sphère infinie dont le centre est partout, la circonférence nulle part." To say with a talker's ease things as difficult as thought—what an art of prose! To give to calculated order, to hard intellectual structure, such an air of naturalness, almost of improvisation! To confine a richness of varied elements into sentences as simple as poverty! With a casual hand to place each of these sentences where it can look backward and forward! Here are closeness with ease, wit with profundity, gaiety that diffuses light. How lucid Latin lucidity is, and how Latin! By its side our English prose looks turbid and slipshod.

A bookish pleasure, people may say who insist upon a distinction between literature and life. But even when we are tasting, smelling, touching the most real of real worlds, our life is only something that goes on inside us. It

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does not require that the stimuli we are responding to should have animal or vegetable life of their own. Life can be better measured by the intensity of that process which is going on inside the man or woman who is doing the living. Often for days on end I am asleep in life and only wake up when I begin to read. Sometimes I am exhausted by the society of persons who think they can open their closed minds by taking them to walk through a museum of modern topics. After such an experience it is a relief to read Montaigne, to remember that nobody, in any of the three centuries since his time, has had a mind more free, to feel a deep gratitude to the nation of whose free spirit his genius is the most complete expression.

Free minds are not possible to most of us, but a belief in their existence is possible, and it was from France that some of us first got this belief. From France, too, we first learned, although never before so solidly as in the past year and a half, that qualities we had been taught in youth to look upon as mutually destructive, could exist side by side in one nation, that the light hand might be strong, and the laboring

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mind take its ease. Of France we may know little, yet our affection is real. It springs from gratitude for qualities we wish the world to keep. Gratitude is at the bottom of the anxiety we have felt, for a week past, while listening for news from Verdun.

MARCH, 1916.

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HEADMASTERLY

OF course it could not have been the faculty supper, the headmaster repeated to himself, that was keeping him awake. Half a dozen oysters, a Welsh rabbit, a bottle of stout—there was nothing on this list to bring insomnia upon a man who was in the prime of life, who had ridden ten miles and played two games of squash that afternoon, and who had been notably abstinent at dinner. For tea he had had one cup, rather weak, and half a crumpet, with butter on it and cinnamon. Yes, and a little sugar, the finest muscle stimulant in the world. Luncheon?—but that was before his afternoon's exercise and could not be counted against him.

In general the headmaster was not given to explaining a wakeful night by physical causes. Had he been a bachelor he would never even have considered what he ate or drank as possibly responsible for his sleeplessness. His habit was to look higher, to scrutinize the spiritual

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sources of unrest. But Isabel, one of the most loyal women on God's footstool, had a prosaic earthly way of trying to relate indisposition of every kind to diet. Perhaps her only fault. It was because of Isabel that the headmaster reviewed the three meals he had had since luncheon, and felt appreciably comforted by their obvious blamelessness.

This time, moreover, he had an obviously spiritual cause for lying awake. Although he had dined out he had returned to the school immediately dinner was over, in order not to break his pleasant custom of reading aloud, on Saturday evenings, to such boys as voluntarily came to his study to listen, one of our greater masterpieces of English. Of late he had been reading Shakespeare, upon whom he was to deliver an address next week before a teachers' association. "The Relation of the Historical Plays to Adolescence," he thought he should call it. Last night, being unable to find the dependable Rolfe, and trusting to his familiarity with the danger signals, he had essayed the first part of Henry IV in an unexpurgated edition. With disastrous results. His retreat had not been altogether seemly. Few of his hearers knew that

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his inadvertence was due not to unfamiliarity with the play, but solely to the grave problem which obsessed him.

Young Wicks was the problem. The headmaster sat up and looked out of his window. His bedroom was in the tower of the oldest building in school, and gave him a plunging view downhill to the river. The high falls, dividing the fresh water from the salt, were hidden by a knoll, but he could hear them. His eyes followed the broad stream, visible here and there in clearings under the moon, as it travelled to the sea ten miles away, and the town. Yes, the school was too near the town nowadays, unquestionably too near.

But for the town he should not have been constrained to get rid of the boy Wicks. But for the town Wicks might never have gone wrong, might have enjoyed the full school course of Christian and manly influence. Not that Wicks was an unmanly boy, exactly. He played games well, although showing little interest in the discipline so essential to team work. What he preferred was to roam the country by himself, or with one or two companions, climbing trees, scaling cliffs, shooting rabbits with

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a smuggled twenty-two, trespassing wherever trespassers were least welcome.

Things such as these might have been overlooked, had in fact been overlooked, so likable was the boy Wicks, all last year. The headmaster had cautioned him several times, but had not been able to decide upon expulsion. He had been reluctant to blast the boy's future.

But last week had come the discovery. Wicks, who would do none of his lessons except history, had paid no attention when called upon to construe his Ovid. He had not heard. He was absorbed in a private occupation of his own. Strange to say, he was writing. The Latin master, who also trained the eleven and was disgusted at Wicks's frivolous attitude toward football, had bidden Wicks hand up what he was writing. The Latin master was amazed. Wicks had been writing a drinking song.

Then the whole story came out. The Latin master made a search of Wicks's belongings. He found two notebooks crammed with the most damning evidence against the boy, whose neglect of his studies was explained. Here were songs about the country near the school, about

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animals and birds, songs that sounded muffled in snow, songs in which spring woke up and brooks and rivers pelted towards the sea. No great harm here, though the boy might have been better employed. But the other things! Stories that Wicks must have picked up on the docks of the town, when the ships came to port, and that were filled with sailors' talk, stories in which the characters talked like the mill operatives—why, the boy must have known shorthand, though he said he didn't and was usually truthful. He must have spent hours in the very lowest company. Worse still, he evidently had not been satisfied with what he saw and heard on the docks, he must have made friends with common sailors and gone with them to the vilest places, for there were songs of such grossness that the headmaster could not imagine they would be tolerated except by drunken sailors, navvies and unfortunate females.

Worst of all, these songs—which Wicks said he had not heard anywhere, they had just come into his head—were jolly in a queer unconcerned way. Of course the headmaster had not laughed when he read them, or came anywhere near laughing. The only time he had even

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smiled was at a speech in verse which Wicks had put into the mouth of the Latin master, and in which tackling a dummy had been made to seem part of the Christian life.

There was a profusion and variety about Wicks's output that were merely astounding. How did the boy find time? He neglected his lessons shamefully, but even so—? Upon the reading of Wicks's complete works the headmaster had expended the leisure of four or five days. More than his leisure, in fact. And he had set aside just this time for the composition of "The Historical Plays in Relation to Adolescence."

Wicks had not had much to say for himself. "I really have no case, sir," he had replied to searching questions. "Hadn't we better just call the whole thing off?" In the end, however, he had confessed everything—how he let himself out of his dormitory by a water pipe and shinned up again before daybreak—everything except the name of the chauffeur whose employer's motor he borrowed for his nocturnal visits to the town. Not more than a dozen times in all. Yes, he had been two or three times to disorderly houses with sailor friends,

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but he had gone only to hear the talk, he had never done anything worse than to drink a bottle or so of beer. As for his writings, Wicks said he had been so surprised to find the world was like that that he had felt he must get things down in black and white; and sometimes, when he had a glimpse of a sailor's life, or a loose woman's, he couldn't help trying to guess what the rest of the story was like, and what kind of people they were anyway. Hence the stories and the dialogued scenes.

Wicks made no objection when the headmaster told him he must go. He did, however, showing his first signs of hesitation, ask whether it might not be possible to give Wicks senior a fictitious account of things. "I suppose you couldn't say I had failed to keep up with my form, sir? Or that I had brought beer to chapel or something?" He was a surprising boy. Was he afraid to have his father know the truth? Not exactly that. He did not mind his father knowing he had gone to the town at night. "But I'm afraid he might burn my stuff, sir," and Wicks pointed to his manuscript. "Couldn't you keep it all for me until the storm blows over at home? I really think I am making some-

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thing out of it. Half of this is only first or second draft. I wish you could, sir."

And the headmaster, although Mr. Wicks deserved better treatment, having given a lectern to the school last term, had agreed to say nothing about young Wicks's literary efforts. He had solaced his conscience by announcing that he should keep the manuscripts for the present. Whether he should ever return them was another question, he added, but young Wicks did not look at all disappointed.

"My boy," the headmaster had said in conclusion, "wherever you go, do not neglect your studies. You have a certain literary gift. Do not let it ever be said of you by the critics that you have small Latin and less Greek." And the headmaster had not neglected the inevitable question: "Why did you do this? Were you not happy in school?" He was thinking, when he went to sleep at last, of Wicks's answer: "I don't know, sir. There were lots of things I liked here, but it all seemed so darned orderly and harmless."

The headmaster was wakened by Isabel's tapping on his door. She too had had a bad night. The Shakespeare incident had troubled her.

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"And I've been thinking. James, dear, couldn't you say something like this to the teachers' association—make them realize how different the works of Shakespeare would have been if he had only gone to a good Church school?" But James answered, with an expression of countenance rather puzzling to Isabel, that he didn't see how he could.

NOVEMBER, 1918.

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DISCLOSURE DAY

A FEW months before Joseph Usher's thirteenth birthday his mother informed his father that the time was approaching when they must tell Joe. Dick Usher made no objection. He had never approved Maria's policy of reticence. "Why," he often said to her, for a year or two after she had announced her policy, "why can't you let Joe hear these things naturally, from other boys, the way I did?" And Maria, whose character had the merit of firmness, did not answer more than two or three times. So long as Dick carried out her wishes she respected his freedom not to understand her reasons.

There were a good many things poor Dick did not understand. Maria had explained to him, once or twice, why they went to live in the country a few years after Joe's birth, why Joe was to have tutors until he went to boarding school, why he was to be kept from contamination by other boys until he was twelve or thirteen. But Dick never got Maria's idea

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through his head. She put words he did not know into sentences he could seldom listen to the whole of.

Little by little, however, Dick had come to the conclusion that Maria's system was not doing Joe much harm. Although Joe liked to study he had neither the excessive egotism nor the excessive shyness nor the excessive cheek which sometimes afflict a solitary child. He was quite at home in a catboat and on a horse. Both with gun and rifle he was a fair shot. He could already putt more consistently than his father. His instructor in boxing was more than satisfied. And Dick, without having betrayed all his hope to anybody, was persuaded that Joe was a natural volleyer.

Maria never suspected Dick's critical attitude. She had not time for such things. But his approval of her decision to tell Joe was too facile to satisfy her. It provoked her to something she called discussion. She told Dick that the interval between Disclosure Day and the opening of school must be neither too long nor too short. It must, in fact, be of exactly the right length. To send Joe forth into the herd before he had grown accustomed to his burden of

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knowledge would be an injustice to a sensitive boy. Nature must be given adequate time in which to efface the stigmata of initiation. On the other hand, the body of fresh knowledge must still be vivid enough in the boy's mind for him to distinguish, upon his arrival at the school, between accessions to this knowledge and mere repetitions.

"Our experiment," Maria concluded, "will be a failure, or perhaps I should rather say its success will be gravely compromised, unless it be made in conditions which will constitute it a distinctly fruitful approach to that gregarious life which Joe is about to enter."

Now this was the kind of sentence that Dick could never attend to. It put him to sleep. But its successor woke him. "However," Maria was saying, "we can discuss the date on our way to California." Dick did not want to go to California. Again and again he had given Maria all sorts of good reasons for not going. He had kept from her nothing but the truth—that he wanted to be at home this spring, he wanted to ride with Joe through the woods on lengthening afternoons, to walk with him before the roads got dusty. Summer? Yes, they'd

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have the summer together, many summers, but this was the last spring. Of course there was no good saying things like this to Maria.

This threatened discussion, as it happened, never took place. A letter from Dr. Claxton, headmaster of the school for which Joe had been put down, said a vacancy had unexpectedly occurred. He gave his reasons for thinking they might wish to send Joseph to St. Peter's at the conclusion of the Easter holidays. The date was only a fortnight off, yet Maria, notwithstanding the fact that the picking and choosing of Disclosure Day was thus taken out of her hands, at once accepted Dr. Claxton's offer. Dick wondered why. He had even a hazy feeling that Maria wanted to deprive him of his unspoken argument against the trip to California.

Having dreaded Disclosure Day, on the few occasions when he thought of it at all, Dick was not pleased to find that it had arrived. "By our methods of introducing the subject," Maria assured him, "we can fix its exact importance in Joe's mind. You, as his father, must tell him, very seriously and very frankly, that he has hitherto lived in an ignorance which, most

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formative until now, must now be brought to an end. When you are certain that his attention has been arrested you may give him the books. Here they are. I regret my inability to be with you. I shall return from town in time for dinner."

As soon as Maria was safely on her way to the station Dick summoned Joe to the library. The summons was an undignified whistle.

"I say, Joe," he began, "here's something I don't think you've read and that you might have a look at. They're yours if you like 'em."

Maria never succeeded, not even after the fatal fruit of Disclosure Day had ripened, in obtaining from Dick any save the cloudiest account of this interview. She never discovered that Dick and Joe had spent the whole of Disclosure Day together, reading the enlightening books aloud and laughing.

No bad news reached the Ushers until the middle of June, when they stopped at St. Peter's, a week before school closed, on their way home from California. Even then Dr. Claxton was most kind. Joseph, he said, was a good boy. He was a manly little fellow. He

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had a natural batting eye and his throwing to bases was unusually accurate for one so young. He was a promising candidate for the choir. Nevertheless, and Dr. Claxton came now to the most painful part of his duty, he must ask them to withdraw Joseph from St. Peter's.

It took Maria and Dr. Claxton some little time to understand each other. She was slow to realize that Joe's fault was the habit of writing jokes on slips of paper and passing them about in study hours. Little by little he had demoralized his whole form. Almost all the boys kept one eye on Joe, waiting and watching for him to start a joke on its rounds, ready to laugh even before the joke was made known. Dr. Claxton had never seen a boy who knew by heart so many of the world's oldest stories. Study in the first form had ceased to be.

At this point Maria suggested to Dick that he had an engagement to play squash with the mathematics master. Alone with Dr. Claxton she told him about Disclosure Day. Her married life, she said, and she spoke in the strictest confidence, had been impaired by her husband's inclination to tell stories and repeat jokes. She

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had determined that her son should never become a similar thorn in the flesh of his companions. Therefore she had done her utmost to keep him from knowing that there was such a thing as a pleasantry or an anecdote in the world. She had persuaded her husband, not without difficulty, to cooperate by abstinence from jesting. On Disclosure Day three carefully selected jest books had been put in Joseph's hands. After he had read them, just before he came to St. Peter's, she had told him that the contents of these books were secrets known to all, and that he must take all other boys' knowledge for granted. She did not comprehend how the result could have departed so widely from her justifiable expectations.

To Maria's extreme surprise it was Dick who found a way out of their predicament. Although Dr. Claxton averred that neither suasion nor threats had any power over Joe, Dick succeeded in inducing the Doctor to give the boy one more chance in the autumn. Stranger still, beyond saying that he had persuaded one of the masters to tutor Joe throughout August, Dick would give no account of his plan. After

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fifteen years of married life he had made a declaration of independence.

Once at home again, however, Dick consented to explain. His idea had come to him when he saw the effect of St. Peter's upon Joe, whose eagerness to study had completely disappeared. Dick had gone to every class-room and picked out the likeliest master, Mr. Harold Winship.

"I hate to spoil Joe's August," he said. "But I guess it's the only way." He undid several parcels and showed Maria more jestbooks than she had supposed the world could contain. "Joe has got to study these," he went on. "And I've outlined a course for him and the tutor. Like this."

Maria read the paper Dick put under her eyes: "The jests of Western Europe, with special attention to their relative longevity. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 9-11. The morphology of pleasantry, considered in relation to the anecdotes of (a) dominant and (b) subject races. Tuesday and Thursday, 9-11, with a third period at the pleasure of the instructor. Laboratory and field work, Saturday, 9-12."

Maria's eyes grew wet as Dick unfolded his plans. "Richard," she said, "I have done you

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an injustice. But are you sure Mr. Winship will understand?"

"He won't have to," Dick answered. "Winship believes in mental discipline. He can kill anybody's interest in anything while you wait."

JUNE, 1918.

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HENRY AND EDNA

I

OWING to the recent death of Edna's father, the wedding was to be quieter than Edna's mother would have liked it. When the two women were alone they spoke of the wedding as something whose quietness had to be borne with and forgiven. Edna's mother spoke in the same strain even when Henry W. Henry was with them. Although he regretted her tone, having liked Edna's father, Henry nevertheless listened with an air of slight continual deference. He had been brought up to show respect for age.

Sitting alone in his rooms, though never in more than one at a time, Henry regretted the antenuptial fuss, the acknowledgment of gifts, the passionate distracted shopping. He wondered how his wedding could have sounded any louder if it hadn't been muffled in bereavement. The noise of its approach was discordant. These should have been still and listening

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weeks, he felt, and dove-colored by thoughts of sweet and serious change. He determined to do something which would make his feeling plain. It was a worthy feeling. Something so new that it had never been done, or not done for years. He consulted the liberal education to which so many young men of ample means are somewhat exposed. He seemed to remember that wedding songs were formerly commanded by the great. He knew a poet with a number in the telephone book, called him up and ordered a wedding song.

When the poet came, by appointment, he bore a lute in his hand, and began to sing the song he had written. This conduct was so surprising to Henry that at first he did not understand the words. Nor was his surprise less when he began to hear them. It was a song all of echoes, like the old songs in old books, telling how the maidens first undressed the bride, and then said good-by to her who would not wake again a maid, but would rise with a new and nobler name. And in the song one prayed that the night might abide, and morning be long in coming.

Henry did not care for this song, which

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seemed to unshadow his domestic life, to pour an incurious bright light upon him and Edna.

Again the poet came, bringing this time a song made out of dreams. The strangest shapes of grotesque or very awful dreams, dreams which even to himself Henry had not told, which he hoped he had forgotten, whose remotest relevance to his marriage he had denied with outraged self-respect, dreams he had been afraid to look at—these the poet seized and related to one another and made into a prelude to marriage, the fulfilment of dreams. The poet remembered what he couldn't possibly have known. He remembered dreams that Edna, who was well brought up, never, never could have had.

Henry was shocked by this song, which dragged sinister and absurd things from their corners into the light and studied them with curious eyes.

When the poet came for the third time he brought a song which no poet wrote, most surely, but some man of figures with a turn for scansion and rhyme. This man treated Henry and Edna as if they were quite ordinary people, obedient to statistical laws that govern the

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herd. He reminded them that the shadow of divorce, though it fell across their wedded life, was no thicker than the shadow of a tall blade of grass, and that the rest of their future was sunlit. He explained this by addressing Henry and Edna in the cheerfullest stanza of his song:

> Your chance of staying wedded until death
> Dissolve this holy union and ideal,
> Endowed with riches personal and real,
> Is twelve to one, the statistician saith.

Not even the poet seemed certain of this song's acceptance, for he brought with him a fourth, which sang minutely of announced engagements in the papers, of invitations to be addressed and stamped and posted, of the trousseau, its items, and of those present. It was a bleak picture of the actual life Henry W. Henry was nowadays obliged to share as often as he went to Edna's. It smelled of details.

Henry saw there really wasn't any use. The poet didn't appear to get the idea. Henry told the poet so. But the poet, quite uncowed, rebuked Henry, whom he accused of rejecting an Elizabethan marriage song, a Freudian dream poem, a poem which faithfully estimated Mr. and Mrs. Henry's chance of keeping out of the

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divorce court, and a poem descriptive of the life Henry wasn't ashamed to be living. Neither tradition, nor dreams scientifically expounded, nor the dangers and banalities of real life, would Henry have. What was his idea?

Henry couldn't exactly put it into words, though the poet assured him that words, if the idea were to be communicated at all, must be the medium employed. The original idea was by now obscured. Henry knew, of course, though he didn't say, that he loved Edna with a simple, manly love, the love of a strong man for a nice girl, but different. He wanted to sacrifice himself for her, and protect her, and put his arm round her waist, and pay her bills. He saw her in white, with a long white veil, standing by his side at the altar. He heard her say "I do." He saw a house on the southern slope of a hill, and a dining-room, and Edna's face across the breakfast table. He saw a sitting-room in autumn, lamps lighted, a temperate fire of logs, with Edna making tea after their brisk gallop. He saw days farther off, and children learning outdoor games under his tuition. Fearfully he half saw her wondering eyes newly awake, in earliest light, before daybreak. But

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at this he shied away. He never forgot what he had been taught, that it is unlovely to foresee what it will be lovely to know some day, and through golden years to remember. His imagination walked the near future like a sedate cat on a table, steering clear of fragile things.

MAY, 1915.

II

From the terrace below, where Audrey Henry, aged seven, was playing with Cyril Packard Henry, aged five, came a noise of protest, followed by silence.

Henry W. Henry laid his paper on the breakfast table and looked at his watch. "Almost six minutes past nine," he said, speaking in a perfectly just voice. "This is the third successive morning that Miss Rankin has been late in beginning the children's lessons."

Edna, after giving her husband one of those culpably indifferent smiles which proved that she had not been paying attention, went on with her letters. Henry noticed that she had spilled minute portions of soft-boiled egg on its shell. He frowned slightly.

"This must be meant for you," said Edna,

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stretching her arm far across the table to give him a letter. Although it was an appeal from one of his favorite charities, the Friendless Foundlings' Friendly Country Home, whose directors invited him, in view of this and in view of that, to increase his generous annual subscription, Henry gave the invitation only part of his mind. Something he had read in his paper troubled him. He looked speculatively at Edna. What was the most delicate method of introducing such a delicate subject to the purest of women?

"My dear," he said at last, "when you have finished the perusal of your mail be so good as to read with attention the passage I have marked, thus." While speaking he got up, walked round the table and spread the paper flat beside Edna's plate. Through eight years of married life he had tried in this way to communicate to Edna his dislike of reaching and stretching.

Not until Edna had read her last letter, and had spilled a little more egg, on her plate this time, did she turn to the passage her husband had marked. It narrated a distressing incident. At a public meeting in New York, attended

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largely by women in humble circumstances, resolutions had been adopted in favor of repealing all laws which restrained persons who knew how to limit the number of their offspring from spreading their knowledge. Nor was this the gravest aspect of the affair. Not content with urging the repeal of these laws, a performance which in itself admitted that such laws were in existence, one of the women speakers had gone to a few among the audience, whispering to women of the poorer sort precisely what the law forbade them to learn.

"Well?" asked Henry W. Henry.

But Edna, without any pretense of transition, had turned again to her letters: "By the way, Henry, the Wilburs *can* come to us the first week in July. Milly writes that it's the only week they are free. So I'm afraid we shall have to put off your sister till the end of August. Do you mind?"

Henry could not very well object. He knew exactly how large the house was, and why. Eight years ago, when making plans which gave a room to each of two future children, he had perhaps had the surprising number of his relatives in mind when he directed his architect to

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put in only one guest room. Even if he had felt disposed to object Henry would not have chosen the present moment for so doing. A more serious subject engrossed him.

"My dear," he began again, "I fear that last night's events in New York have not made upon you the impression I had looked for. I regard this woman's conduct as ominous. One moment! Permit me to finish, if you don't mind. Incidents of this kind are becoming more and more frequent. If something is not done in protest we shall before long find, forsooth, that the size of families has become a matter almost determinable by the will of the parents. Now, I am not speaking lightly. What I am about to suggest is the result of thought. It is not the result of anything but thought. I have given this matter a constantly increasing attention for months. I think we should take a stand. To do so is, as I conceive it, our duty."

Edna gave Henry W. Henry a look which might have disconcerted a man less conscious of rectitude.

"*We* take a stand?" she said. "Audrey is seven, Cyril five. How can we?"

Henry's face went a little pale. "It had not

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occurred to me, I own, that you would look at this question from a personal standpoint, although I am not unaware that your sex has from time to time been accused of preferring the personal approach to social problems. Let us leave you and me out of it, I beg you. My idea is to discontinue my subscription to sundry other good works, including the Friendless Foundlings' Friendly Country Home, and to send a check to the association which is fighting the repeal of these wholesome laws. I shall be glad of your permission to send that check in the names of Mr. *and Mrs.* Henry W. Henry."

Edna was near the window, watching a gleam of river at the valley bottom. "Audrey seven, Cyril five," she repeated, and added, in a gentle tone: "Wouldn't that check be the least little mite hypocritical?"

There was irritation in Henry's answer. "My dear, the information which you and I, since you compel me to think of ourselves, know how to make a moral use of, will, if widely disseminated, encourage not only childless marriages, which are seldom happy, but also irregular and I fear temporary unions. My knowledge brings with it no temptation to un-

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faithfulness. Are you tempted because of your knowledge that sin may be committed with impunity? My tongue stumbles at such a question. But we must not think only of ourselves. Other persons, less fortunate in their early education than we, will, if these laws are repealed, rush headlong into all sorts of illicit relations. This world will not punish their sin, which in fact will, it is but too probable, be known only to God. The relation between man and woman is one as to which God has said 'Are you willing to pay the price, which is children?' That is the test."

"But not for us, apparently," said Edna. Henry did not seem to hear her. "I feel so strongly on this point," he went on, "that I would rather forever forego the advantage of my knowledge than have it get into the wrong hands by being spread broadcast."

Edna put a hand on his shoulder. "Henry," she said, "I do not want any more children. We have money enough, I know, but have we time? Could I see as much of Audrey and Cyril as I do now if we had had a child every two years? I don't think so."

Henry, flushed now and breathing hard, did

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not waver: "There are other ways of living up to our principles than by having children."

Edna's answer was a stare of innocent inquiry. When she understood she kissed the top of Henry W. Henry's head. "Don't be silly." She spoke lightly. "I'm off to the school room."

"Wait!" Henry's voice was loud and stern. "I am intensely in earnest. Rather than not take the stand I propose to take I would set an example to all mankind by living a life of—of——"

"By living as we did before we were married?" Edna had these lapses into crudity. Henry had noticed them before. "Besides," she continued, "what in the world do you mean by an example to mankind? Suppose you do carry out your program? How is anybody going to know that we aren't still living exactly as we have lived since Cyril was born? You wouldn't *tell* people, would you?"

She was gone, and Henry W. Henry, in the silence which fell upon him, remembered with annoyance that before marriage Edna had never betrayed her tendency to argue.

Nevertheless, there was a certain awkward force in what she had said about example. If

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no one except God knew of the Henry W. Henrys' self-control how could they be described as setting an example to any one else? Might it not be better to show the world one family, at least, that could afford to let Nature send as many little ones as she chose? The words "could afford to" grated unpleasantly on Henry's inward ear. He had not meant to use them.

Henry reread the appeal from the Friendless Foundlings' Friendly Country Home. Then he went to his library, taking his letters with him. In leaving the library door a little ajar he had of course a purpose. One rule of the household was that Audrey and Cyril, if the library door were not shut, might always interrupt Papa for the purpose of asking a sensible question. It was in the spirit of this rule that Henry, although he had in general no liking for texts on walls, had caused one framed text to be hung above the library fireplace.

As the familiar words now caught Henry's eye they suddenly acquired a new meaning. How strange that this meaning should hitherto have escaped him! How could he have failed to see in them a divine command?

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"That settles it," said Henry. After all, no act can be an example unless it be publicly known. He really had no choice.

Sitting down at his desk he wrote, in a spirit of obedience and self-renunciation, first a letter to the Friendless Foundlings' Friendly Country Home, saying that unexpected expenses constrained him to withhold the contribution he had so much enjoyed making in happier years; and secondly, a letter to his architect in New York, asking for an estimate of the cost of making a small addition to the country house of the Henry W. Henrys.

April, 1916.

III

That night Henry W. Henry lay sleepless for a time that he reckoned by hours. Edna, to be sure, had seemed to put her question without any will to annoy. She had had the dutiful air of a wife who seeks light and turns automatically to its source. Yet eleven years of married life had taught Henry to suspect that no question could be innocent which he could not answer. He stayed awake to nurse his irritation. As the night grew older the rising wind,

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which threatened to tear the curtains off their rods, sounded more and more sinister.

Uneasily, restlessly, turning every few minutes in his bed, angry with Edna because she slept without stirring, Henry subjected the events of the day to what he called a dispassionate review. No, it was not true that he had chosen for the ceremony an afternoon when Edna would be away. Had he not been waiting, merely and justifiably waiting, for weather that promised a rainy night and safety from flying sparks? Had not his judgment, upon this as upon so many other occasions, proved sound? Already the rain was beginning. The ceremony had happened to coincide with Edna's absence from home. That was all.

The ceremony itself had been well managed. That, at least, Henry W. Henry could truthfully say. With his own hands, assisted by the willing hands of Audrey Henry, aged nine, and Cyril Packard Henry, aged seven, he had laid a small bonfire in a spot previously chosen, at a safe distance from the barn, the garage and the house. Thither the children had trundled in their wheel-barrows those books which Henry had taken from their shelves, caused to be piled

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in two piles, one on the library and one on the school room floor, had surveyed once more in a judicial spirit, and had doomed. Meanwhile Miss Rankin had put Raymond Ellerton Henry, aged one, into his baby-carriage and wheeled him to the place of ceremonial execution.

To the speech with which the proceedings began, and in which he had tried to make the children grasp the fundamental reasons for the step he and they were about to take, Henry W. Henry looked back with self-respect. Here and there he had said things a little beyond Audrey and Cyril, but he had done so intentionally, knowing that what they did not understand they would nevertheless remember, that later in life they would make the wisdom he had lent them their very own. And his speech had had the supreme merit of clearness. Even Miss Rankin, who, though a good governess, sometimes looked inattentive when Henry talked, had been impressed. As for Raymond, too immature to react except by pointing at the bonfire and crowing, one might at least hope that the scene would not be quite wasted upon him. Earliest memories were often the deepest and most formative.

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With soberness and gravity, in a style not uninfluenced, Henry W. Henry ventured to hope, by a perusal of opinions handed down from the bench, he had explained why the library in the library and the library in the school room must be purged by the burning of these German books. German literature, he had said, might, if one considered the subject in its larger aspects, be divided into two parts. There was what might be called an idyllic literature, which was designed chiefly for youth, and which by its pictures of humble folk, of toy-makers, wood-cutters, gnomes and peasants, gave a false and lying idea of German life and the German mind. In fact, there was only one form of hypocrisy to which these writers had not resorted, and that was because the notion of fair play was so inconceivable to them that they had never even thought of pretending that any one in Germany ever attempted to teach boys to play fair. Was this literature of lies fit to live? Should these pictures of a good Germany, of a land where simple people were addicted to simple peaceful pleasures, be suffered to poison young and credulous minds?

So dramatic was Henry's pause, and so com-

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pelling, that both Audrey and Cyril, although nobody had coached them, answered "no" almost simultaneously.

Proceeding to the other division of German literature, taking literature, as he believed he had already remarked, in its widest sense, proceeding to the propagandist books addressed chiefly to those of somewhat riper years, Henry asked whether a systematic attempt to make the world German in thought, as a preliminary step to the accomplishment of the odious design of making it German in fact, could be tolerated in a republic? The Germans were such poor psychologists, when it came to dealing with other nations, that everything they said produced an effect the exact opposite of that which they intended, yet even the Germans could not be so ignorant of other men's minds as to suppose that this systematic attempt to corrupt them would be long endured.

After the speech came the rest of the ceremony. Audrey and Cyril committed the assembled books one by one to the flames. Upon the whole they did their part in the right spirit, although Audrey once or twice betrayed an unbecoming exultation, and although Cyril, when

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"Struwelpeter" burst into flames, gave one mournful misplaced howl. Henry was quick to repress these manifestations. He reminded the children that a just sentence gains in dignity if executed without passion and without tears.

Not until the last book had been executed did Edna arrive. She was in her riding habit, her cheeks glowed, she walked swiftly. "I saw your smoke from the stable," she said. "O children, what a nice bonfire."

Even the children, so it seemed to Henry in retrospect, had heard this as a wrong note. Yet he could not help observing signs of relief, as if from a tension almost too august, in the eagerness with which they had turned to their mother and bewildered her with explanations.

At first Edna had not understood. For a while it had seemed to Henry that she would never understand. At last, when what had happened had become clear to her, she looked quickly at Henry W. Henry and away again. The look was the brush of a bird's wing, no more, yet Henry felt that Edna was ashamed. She stared hard at the skyline, her face changed, she began to laugh and stopped short. Then

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she had kissed Audrey and Cyril, suddenly, had snatched Raymond Ellerton out of his carriage and borne him away to the house.

Henry W. Henry's recollections, while he lay awake and resented Edna's sleep and quietness, did not stop at this point. He remembered her visit to the school room, where he was certain she had stood and looked at the empty half-shelf. He knew her posture, for he had found her standing and staring in the library, where nearly two shelves were empty. And he remembered how she had said nothing, not even when they were motoring home alone after dinner, about the event of the day.

It was Henry himself who broke this silence, while they were undressing. He told Edna all about it. He explained that the reason he had given for not riding with her that afternoon was his real reason. And Edna, after saying there were some things she had rather not talk about, had talked easily and pleasantly enough about other things. Only after she had got into bed did she advert to the subject.

"Henry," she said, "I have been trying to understand. I almost do. Except one thing. Why do we Americans have to treat German

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books in a way that French or English people would think silly?"

This was the question which kept Henry sleepless. Oddly enough, he had not been able to think of the right answer.

But night is a bringer of sleep and of answers with sleep. In the earliest dawn Henry woke suddenly. His heart was beating fast. The waking and the excitement were effects of one cause, a Thought. His answer had come to him.

"Edna," he said, and touched her shoulder. "Are you asleep, my dear?" Edna moved a little, and said, "Well?"

"I have been thinking over your question, my dear, the answer to which, I cannot quite see why, did not immediately suggest itself. We must bear in mind that nature, which never repeats herself, has given to each nation its own characteristics. Ours is an idealism that I hope I am entitled to call lofty. Just as our American conversation is purer than, I am told, the conversation of the corresponding upper classes in England, so our literature is purer than, I am told, the literature of France. You will have, I presume, no difficulty in following me when

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I say that we have here a symbolism of which the significance can hardly be overestimated. As our ideal of purity in speech is higher than the French or the English ideal, so our ideal of patriotism is so much more exalted that we burn those German books which they still keep, I trust unread, upon their shelves."

A long pause followed this speech. Henry W. Henry himself broke the silence. "May I hope that you have grasped my explanation sufficiently to acknowledge its conclusiveness? . . . My dear Edna, you don't mean to tell me that you are asleep?"

But apparently, to judge from the regularity of her breathing, this was precisely what Edna did mean to tell her husband. The rain was over, the winds were laid. In the quiet of the early morning, too early for the noise of birds, Henry lay and meditated upon the beautiful completeness of his answer to Edna.

JUNE, 1918.

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SAFETY IN NUMBERS

NOT until close upon John Florian's death did his friends get a clue to his deportment, courteous always, yet as preoccupied as that of an inventor on the brink of discovery. We all noticed this, of course, as we had noticed his aversion from women's society, in which he would have been so well fitted to gain pleasure by pleasing. He was commonly understood to be a married man, although no one knew whether it was by death or otherwise that he had lost his wife. A portrait in his library, painted years ago in a rather niggling manner, and with that air of being a good likeness which is so unmistakable when you haven't seen the original, represented a woman with abundant bright hair, untroubled shallow baby-blue eyes, and matchless placidity. It was this air of placidity, more than anything else, which fixed your attention and stuck in your memory. But John Florian, who retained at fifty-five his formidable gift for preventing indiscreet questions, never said who the lady was.

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Never, I mean, until that day, the last time I saw him alive, when he honored me with his confidence. Not until after his funeral did I learn, through a series of those cautious moves by which everybody tries to find out how much everybody else knows, that Mr. Florian had repeated, substantially without variation, in the closing weeks of his illness, to pretty much any one who dropped in, the following story.

Having married, at the age of twenty-nine, a lady some seven years his junior, Florian withdrew to a castle long in the possession of his mother's family, and lying in the foothills of the range which separates the valley of Aosta from the great plain on which Turin sits exposed. Here he busied himself for a year or so with the management of his maternal estate, with genealogical research, and with occasional stiff climbs in the neighboring Graians. Nor did this methodical and secluded life appear distasteful to Violet Florian, who filled her hours with ministrations among the poor of the neighborhood, and also with needlework, in which she attained a proficiency not surpassed in her husband's experience by any amateur. Although their marriage was childless, a great grief to them

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both, she bore her part in their joint barrenness without complaint.

Something, however, of monotony must have oppressed her serene spirit, as the sequel may show. At the end of the second year of their marriage Florian was summoned to the United States by the illness of his father, a native of that country. He was a little surprised when, his stay being cut short by the sudden release of his parent, he was on the point of embarking for Italy, to learn by letter from his wife that she had filled the castle with young people, three unmarried maidens and four bachelors, whose names were François, Ugo, Leiboldt and Keith-Keith. The names of the women were also given, but these are not germane to our narrative.

As a result of this letter Florian sailed without cabling to his wife. This omission, due in the first instance to displeasure, changed color during the voyage and presented itself as a charming desire to give Violet a charming surprise. Florian's excitement rose as he neared home. So eager was he to arrive that he set out from Turin immediately upon reaching that city, although the chance was small of attaining

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the castle before all its denizens were in bed. Perceiving the hopelessness of his undertaking, and desiring now to retard his arrival until daylight, Florian dismissed his conveyance at a distance of several miles from the castle, and made his way thither on foot.

Just before dawn he caught sight of home. There in the fading moonlight stood his castle, not quite half a mile distant, separated from him by a wild gorge. At once his eyes sought the wing where his wife lay, and fastened themselves upon her very windows. Imagine his amazement, nay, his consternation, upon seeing one of these open, and the figure of a man climb out. In the same window appeared, at almost the same moment, the face of a woman with abundant bright hair unloosed in the moonlight. There was an embrace of farewell, the man's figure climbed down the rough stones, ran swiftly along the castle wall, opened with precaution a door into the furthermost wing, and disappeared.

Even for so good a cragsman as John Florian it took time to climb into and out of the gorge. More than half an hour must have passed before the lightest sleeper among his servants let

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him into the castle, and answered his cautious questions. François, Ugo, Leiboldt and Keith-Keith were all lodged in the wing into which one of them had disappeared. But which one? Exploration of the wing revealed nothing. Every door yielded to Florian's pressure. In each of four rooms he found a bachelor asleep. But already, in Florian's mind, a plan was forming which he resolved to perfect and execute. In his own room, alone, he thought and thought.

John Florian's arrival did not expel his wife's guests. They were to have gone in any event on the following morning, when the men were leaving before daybreak for a brief hunting expedition in the Graians. Violet Florian greeted her husband with placid joy. She commended his unannounced arrival, calling it the sign of a charming desire to give her a charming surprise.

That night, when the women had gone to bed, and the men were gathered at evening's end in the great hall, smoking and talking over the morrow's expedition, its difficulties and other delights, Florian told a story. "In this hall," he began, "a few hundred years ago, one

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of my ancestors did a queer thing. He had discovered that one of his guests was his wife's lover. He did not know which one. So he called his guests together, just as you are here now, and told them what he knew and did not know. 'I give the lover a fortnight,' my ancestor said. 'If he be dead at the end of that time I shall never reproach my wife, never tell her what I know. But if, at the end of the fortnight, the lover be alive, I shall kill my wife.' My ancestor was a man of violence, and of his word." "And the end of the story?" asked one of the guests—no matter which one. Florian took out his watch. "The end of the story? Oh, it's too late for that now. Or too early."

Having said so much, and broken up the company, Florian went to his wife's room and found her sleeping. She did not wake until the sun was high and the men were long gone.

A week later an acquaintance brought bad news. François, seeking to regain his own country by a dangerous pass from Italy into Savoy, had been found dead at the foot of a precipice. He had not taken a guide. Florian trembled when he entered his wife's sitting-room. There she was, at a window that looked

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down the valley toward the great plain, bent over her needlework. She and François! Had it been any of the others, Florian thought, he could better have borne the blow. While he told her that placid face was almost disturbed, and when he had finished she spoke in accents of unaffected regret: "I am so sorry. Such a nice boy."

So the suicide was the accident it seemed. Not François after all. And a kindness for François entered Florian's heart. The next day he learned that Ugo, swimming in the Mediterranean off Ventimiglia, had been drowned. He was swimming alone. Again did Florian fearfully break the news to his wife, and again did Violet pause in her needlework to say: "I am so sorry. Such a nice boy."

"Believe me or not as you please," so Mr. Florian continued his narrative, "but before the fortnight was over Keith-Keith, who had made his way back to England, was killed in the hunting-field. He too was alone when the accident occurred. My wife bore the news of his death as she had borne the news of the earlier accidents. Leiboldt was therefore the man. Would he perhaps hear what accidents had done

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for him? Would he take advantage of them to shirk suicide? You may imagine with what anxiety I asked myself these questions, with what relief I learned, on the last day of the fortnight, that Leiboldt had died from poison in his native beer, at his native city of Munich.

"I was certain, of course, that at the announcement of Leiboldt's death my wife would break down. But she did not, and it was I who swooned when I heard her say, in accents of unaffected regret: 'Our guests were not lucky, were they? Such nice boys.' Yes, my mind was affected by these singular events and her singular attitude toward them. For the months when I was not myself she tended me with a skill equalled only by her devotion. Whether in my delirium I made her acquainted with the truth I never discovered. The subject is one we never referred to. I kept the promise I had made her lover or lovers. I had, indeed, no opportunity of breaking it. For upon my restoration to health Violet disappeared. In what part of the world she now plies her needle I have not been able to ascertain.

"Perhaps I have not pressed my search very zealously. My life has been very full without

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her. Daily have I tried to determine the percentage of suicides among those four deaths. I refer to the deaths of François, Ugo, Leiboldt and Keith-Keith."

JULY, 1915.

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A DRY DINNER

OF all popular errors I take this to be the greatest and most gratuitous, namely, that it is darkest just before dawn. On the contrary, observation and introspection have convinced me that it is darkest just before dinner. I refer to spiritual darkness. How often in old days have I surveyed my evening clothes, tastefully disposed by Heber, my man, and how often have I loathed the sight! How often have I shrunk from getting into that creaking shirt, tying that silly white tie, sullying the purity of one white waistcoat more! Don't misunderstand me. I yield to none in my liking for conspicuous waste, but what sense is there in waste that is not conspicuous? Often and often I have revolted against being an expensively clean unit lost in an expensively clean crowd. Even when I had bought and paid for my seat at a public dinner I have often torn up my ticket, bade Heber put back my things, and dined at home on a chop and a glass of sherry.

That was in the old days. Since July 1, 1919,

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my habits have changed. About five of a winter day I return to my rooms, where I often observe with sorrow that I am dining out, in public, with speeches. I don't have to look at my engagement pad. A glance at the corner of the library breaks the news. Bishop has laid out gin, both vermouths, whisky, soda, has he? That means a public dinner, and I spend a happy hour or two with these restoratives. By the time it's time to dress, my native manly distaste for public dinners is obscured, my inhibitive powers are low, my evening clothes are a suggestion I can't resist, and soon I am in a taxi, holding my meal ticket in my hand. Heber puts it there. He also tells the chauffeur where to go. At this hour such details have usually escaped me.

In its early stages a post-July-1919 dinner is not so bad. Instead of that numbness here, that forced cordiality there, one finds on all sides a sincere friendliness. Everybody has been spending his late afternoon as I've spent mine. Everybody is communicative and witty. Everybody's hand is glad. Everybody rejoices to be one of those present and almost nobody knows why we are present. Are we met to

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honor some genius whose mechanical inventions have not lightened the labor of a single human being? Some poet whose mother bore him in the New England desert a hundred years ago? Some captain of industry who would rather not die at all than die rich? Nobody can answer. The early stages of the dinner pass in friendly rivalry. We all try to guess why we are here.

Yes, and even in its later stages the post-July-1919 dinner has a certain superiority. The alcoholic mist is lifting instead of settling by speech-time. The silence of the hearers is natural, not artificial and reluctant, as it was in the old days. Speaking for myself and for others, I know we are never quieter than when we are sobering up. Perhaps the reason I never liked public dinners, old style, is that I was never in condition to hear accurately what the speakers were saying. Under the new system I don't quite get the earlier performers, which is just as well, but by the time the guest of the evening is on his legs I'd rather listen than talk. The other night, for example, at what I finally discovered to be a literary dinner, I heard a speech which I should have been sorry to miss. Here it is:

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: Sitting here this evening, and listening to the speakers who have praised, in words more eloquent than any I may hope to find, him whom to do honor to whom we have come together to honor, the thought has been born in me, I would say borne in on me, that were he with us today he would be exactly one hundred years young. [Applause]. This, if I may say so, is perhaps the peculiar charm of all centenaries, that they deal fearlessly yet at the same time accurately in round numbers, in numbers as round as that world across one of the unfooted seas of which I have voyaged to meet you tonight. For many years now it has been a laudable practice, in that country which I have been all the prouder to call mine since I have seen face to face this country of which it is one of the parents, for many years it has been the practice, when we celebrate the centenary of one of those immortal dead who live again in minds made absent by their presence, to invite some American sojourner in our midst to bear with us the burden and heat of the birthday. [Laughter and applause]. Among my earliest adult memories was the tears to which an American Ambas-

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sador moved me, one unforgettable evening at King's Sutton, by his pathetic eulogy of the melodious inspirer of Coleridge, William Lisle Bowles. [Cheers]. There is thus a fitting reciprocity, there is that another which one good turn has been said to deserve, in the events which have sent an Englishman among you to lay his wreath on the bier of one whom you must know, I know, yet better than I, although my own youth was nourished on the pages of Henry Russell Whittier. [Prolonged applause]. Not unadvisedly did I speak just now, when I said, in what may have seemed a conventionally modest phrase, that England is only one of America's parents. To be both parents is a privilege rarely reserved for one mortal or for one country. England has counted for much in the nativity of America, no country more. Yet she did not alone work that miracle which is the United States. No, my friends, no. Your national pedigree must read, when the final column is added and the last tide has turned, the United States of America, by England, out of the virgin wilderness. [Tumult and shouting].

Ladies and gentlemen, one hundred and

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twenty years ago these two lands, America and England, stood aloof, the scars remaining, like cliffs which had been rent asunder. How he whose day is today would have marvelled at the change! The healing lapse of time, busily knitting a bridge across that chasm, has united the two Anglo-Saxon countries with hooks of steel. This fact, for fact it is, would to James Greenleaf Longfellow's contemporaries have seemed a vision more wonderful than his own Sir Launfal's; worthy to be immortalized after the good old epic fashion in the verse of his own Evangeline, than which there are in English no collection of hexameters of equal length, save possibly that made in the Bothie of Tober-Na-Vuolich by the late Arthur Hugh Clough. [Loud laughter]. United the two nations stand today, united by blood, by a common past, by a yet more common future. Maud Muller herself, in her own immortal phrase, would have cherished the mere wish for such an union as "a wish that she hardly dared to own." [Prolonged cheers. Cries of "Maud! Maud! Maud!"]. Ladies and gentlemen, not as a stranger, but as an Englishman and a brother, I ask you to join me in drinking a cup of ginger

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ale to the memory of one who had as much love for both our countries as many of us have for either, to the memory of John Wadsworth Lowell. [Cheer upon cheer].

A speech like that is an inspiration. I remember using some such phrase to one of my neighbors, before our gathering dispersed. "Blodgett," said I, "such a speech is more than an event. It is an inspiration." Those were my very words.

APRIL, 1919.

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THE BONDAGE OF SHAW

JUST as Synge makes the ordinary run of contemporary plays sound poor in speech, as Chekhov makes them look too tidily arranged, as Hauptmann shows up their author's failure to compose them with anything deeper than ingenuity, so Shaw makes them appear unintelligent, the work of specialists in theatricals, of men without ideas.

At the theatre, watching a farce, one often guesses that its point of departure was found by answering a question like this: In precisely what circumstances would an almost normal person refrain from telling something which even an idiot, were the circumstances ever so little different, would have stopped the play by telling at once?

Mr. Shaw needs none of these doctored situations to start his farces with. They get under way as simply as his comedies, move at the same pace, and pursue the same end. You cannot, in fact, divide his plays into comedy and farce. All of them, one with a thicker and

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another with a thinner veil over its serious purpose, seek to destroy illusion.

Of course all comedies try more or less to do this, and the better they succeed the better they satisfy the classic idea of comedy. But the scope of comedy is so wide that the illusions may be anything you please. In Miss Austen, for example, they are Emma's illusions as to the feeling of one individual towards another. The mistakes corrected by Molière are graver, more anti-social, matter more to the community. Yet Molière keeps always a faith in the old wisdom of the world. The self-deceptions he exposes are tried before judges assumed to be competent, before a society whose general good sense is taken for granted. Mr. Shaw denies the existence of any such common sense. He is forever telling contemporary society the bad news that illusion is part of its structure. The self-deceiver he assaults and exposes is society itself.

No wonder such a radical fighter puzzled us all at first. His appearance in our meaningless theatre was more surprising than the first appearance, about eighteen-eighty-something, of grape fruit on our tables, many sizes larger than

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our familiar breakfast dishes, and how much more pungent. Nowadays all grape fruit tastes alike. So with Mr. Shaw's plays. They are as pungent as ever, they are larger than of old, but they are no longer new. His late plays are not newer than his earliest. His originality is not a plant of slow growth. Seldom has an artist-philosopher, coming so early into his fortune of convictions, reached the age of sixty with fewer losses of conviction, fewer gains, so little change in the nature of his investments. He believes what he believed and feels what he felt. Hence his uniformity. None of his plays differs from another in tone so widely as "The Master Builder" differs from "An Enemy of Society," or in doctrine so widely as "Une Visite de Noces" differs from "La Femme de Claude." Shaw's is the work of a witty and pugnacious demonstrator, never depressed by the brutality and injustice all about him, always impatient of the lying done in their defense, enjoying mightily his attacks on these lies.

Dumas fils had an even greater talent than Mr. Shaw's for preaching from the stage, but his propaganda was immensely less important. In "Une Visite de Noces," and everywhere else,

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his attention is fixed upon some variety of love. Mr. Shaw looks further afield, knows ever so much more, thinks ever so much more, pays attention to more parts of life. He has examined war, property, education, marriage, home life, romantic love, as they exist in the British world, and he sees that they are bad. His method of proceeding against them is not to turn a full stream of anger directly upon these institutions themselves. His weapon is not anger against things and facts. It is impatience with the romantic idealism which keeps evil alive by seeing things and facts as they are not and by telling lies about them. War, for example, is hateful to Mr. Shaw, but his way of getting rid of it is by exposing and ridiculing the stuff and nonsense talked about military glory. So strong is his preference for taking this way that sometimes one suspects him of detesting conventional notions of military glory more cordially than he detests the realities of war.

Pestilent archaic institutions are the objects of his attack, but its method is such that he seems to be giving most of his attention to the flattering reflection of these institutions in the conventional idealizing mind. He is much less

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a realistic describer and exhibitor than a preacher of the realistic habit. Learn to see things realistically, great things and small, and the future will be better than the present. Once the tribe of romantic liars has been exterminated there will be no war in the world, no profiteering, no parasites living in idleness. Home life will be better and there will be less of it.

Shaw the propagandist, the physician to an ailing society, is so effectively in earnest that everybody who can take his medicine at all comes sooner or later to take it seriously. Most of us pass through several stages. At first we are puzzled and amused by these plays, in which the speeches glitter like razors after a cakewalk, and the mots d'auteur are brilliant as poppies in the wheat. Then it disconcerts us to discover that this paradoxist means bodily harm to the existing order. Next we are exhilarated and stimulated and compelled almost to think for ourselves by his doctrine, so lucid and emphatic and cocksure. It is at a later stage, when we are trying to escape from the prison of Mr. Shaw's common sense, that we take him most seriously.

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It is all very well, we say at this stage, to talk against illusions, but are not some illusions necessary? George Meredith has shown us

> Yonder midnight ocean's force,
> Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
> To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

If the warrior horse were realists, if they foresaw the inevitable faintness and thinness of any line they could rationally hope to throw, with all their ramping, wouldn't they ramp less, and the line on the shore be even thinner and fainter? Illusions do harm, we admit, yet it is by illusion's help that the world does its work. Would not the sanest ambitions dwindle, and the highest hopes fail, if the extent of their future satisfaction could be accurately known?

That way of escaping Mr. Shaw's influence is possible, no doubt, but not for a convert whose mind he has ever thoroughly won. For Mr. Shaw believes the world can get along without any man's best if he be such a weakling that he cannot do his best without telling himself lies. One of these days the world will be manned by a tough-minded realistic crew, whose labor will be none the less diligent because they direct it to strictly attainable ends. And even

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after illusion has gone instinct and impulse will remain. At present married life is made worse than it need be by the romantic idealism of men and women who expect to find it better than it can be. But a more rational expectation, a clear foresight, will not weaken the instinct which brings men and women together. Expecting less happiness in marriage than they now foolishly expect, they will gain a solider happiness than they can have now. The artistic impulse, again, is so inextinguishable that artists will keep pegging away after they have scrapped all their illusions. A painter can stick to his work though he has no hope of beating Velasquez. He paints to make his picture represent what he has seen as he has seen it. So with "the instinct of workmanship" wherever found, and it will be found in abundance.

But if we yield the point, if we grant the truth of all that Mr. Shaw teaches us about illusions, if we concede that all are harmful, that none is necessary, are we condemned never to loosen his grip upon us? At least we can try. To see mankind as divisible into realists and romantic idealists, we may say, is only one way of seeing the world. Turn from Mr. Shaw, for

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whom it is the only way of seeing things as they are, to whatever life we happen to know. No attempt to separate people into realists and romantic idealists can long survive contact with miscellaneous experience. Most of the men and women one sees do not spend most of their time in realizing Mr. Shaw's ideals of realism or romantic idealism. They are quite as significantly classifiable upon other systems. They are not easily classifiable upon any. If we keep his classification in mind long enough, until it looks as strange as a familiar word repeated over and over, it will at last appear arbitrary. Imagine a sculptor who should begin each of his portrait busts with a determination to have the look of it tell us whether the sitter did or did not believe that land ought to be taxed to its full rental value. An exaggeration? Of course. But what of? Of just the impression left on me when I try to remember Mr. Shaw's plays as a whole.

A self-conscious passion for seeing things realistically, or as they are, is a blood relation of its caricature, the passion for seeing things as other people don't. And this, again, is no distant relative of the passion for denying what

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other people see, even when they see truly. Take physical courage, for example, which Mr. Shaw dislikes and denies because it is, after all, the one best bet of the romantic idealists who have invented the myth of military glory. This dislike appears again in his fondness for putting fear, physical fear, upon the stage. Take for another example love, the spring in which rivers of romantic lies have their source. Except as pure life-force, Mr. Shaw has a poor opinion of love. He would resent the behavior of Sir Samuel Romilly, whose wife's death drove him to suicide at the age of sixty-one, because such doings are evidence of a kind not, I admit, very abundant, but still evidence, that passionate love may survive twenty years of marriage. Friendship, too, with its irrational loyalties and its odor of good old times, has been the occasion of the Lord knows how much romantic idealism. Hence, in all Mr. Shaw's plays, so far as I can remember, no representation of friendship on the best terms, between equals. Together with human relations at their intensest and most disinterested, as in friendship and love, he excludes human beings at the full tide of their energy. So much lying has been done about great men

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that he is impatient of greatness. Julius Cæsar is not greater than John Tanner or Andrew Undershaft. Vivie Warren seems almost as great a man as Napoleon.

This denial of the exceptional, this dislike and distrust of it, what are they in Mr. Shaw, but the other side of affirmation that society must be turned into a happier place for average men and women? He is at his most modern in his effort to overthrow all those institutions which keep the poor dependent upon the idle or the active rich, and in his warfare against the romantic lies which sicken and divide all selves except the callous and the blind. His concern for mankind, for a world exempt from tyranny, brutality, unearned leisure, intimidation, for a world in which no man's will is the slave of another man's, and which is filled with men and women who had rather forfeit their respectability than their self-respect, who are neither afraid without cause nor afraid, when there is cause, of being afraid—all this progeny of aspirations is the issue of Mr. Shaw's modern democratic passion.

A modern passion he does not feel is the passion for observing and representing the greatest

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possible amount of human nature, just because it is human nature. He is almost a stranger to that omnivorous curiosity, so widespread nowadays among novelists, historians and psychologists, which is eager to contradict or verify what our fathers have told us about man, to make discoveries, to treat nothing as negligible if it be human. Such a disinterested curiosity would perhaps be an encumbrance to an artist as bent on changing our minds as Mr. Shaw is. Accordingly we find his gift of sharp observation used for the most part upon men and women when they are in contact with romantic idealism, either as its destroyers or its victims, and especially at the moment of their conversion to realism. He has some observation to spare for them at other moments, but unless you remember his purpose, his central drive, you cannot help wondering why he has not more.

"Philosophy serves culture," said Pater, "not by the fancied gift of abstract or transcendental knowledge, but by suggesting questions which help one to detect the passion, and strangeness and dramatic contrasts of life." This is not the kind of philosophy people have in mind when

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they excuse Mr. Shaw's narrowed gaze by calling him an artist-philosopher. Artist-reformer would be nearer the truth, and the distinction between him and the mere artist would remain. The mere artist, whom you may call either a convictionless or a disinterested artist, just as you please, is known by his eagerness to look again and again at the world with fresh eyes. He values life more for its variety and its capability of surprising him than for its conformity with his previous reports upon it. The artist is known by what he omits, the artist-philosopher by what he omits to observe. His subconscious tells him either that his philosophy would be different if he observed more, or else that he would have no end of trouble trying to squeeze his new material into his old system. In this his subconscious does the artist-philosopher a good turn. We forgive Mr. Shaw the hardness and fastness of his conclusions because we know he has observed nothing, literally nothing, that is inconsistent with them. We should never forgive him if he saw all life, and saw it merely as all raw premise for his finished conclusion-product.

It is by never forgetting Mr. Shaw is an artist-

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philosopher that we escape from his bondage. An artist-philosopher is a system-maker, and no system can be true. But even when we are equipped with this knowledge escape from him is not easy. His hold upon us is tenacious. He relaxes our will to get away. As a mere artist his power is not easy to resist. One of the greatest masters of clear statement that have ever lived, a humorist of the first rank, one of the great wits of the world, he knows how to use his wit and humor and clearness to serve his own will, the will to make us disbelieve. A while ago I spoke of his mots d'auteur, but really all his plays are mots d'auteur, spoken with a practical object. Will the next century read and see his plays? I have not the slightest idea. No words of mine, gentle reader, and a fortiori no words of yours, can tell how little we know about the tastes of our successors. But I am willing to bet, if they do read him, that they will find singularly little to skip.

Mr. Shaw's destiny is an odd one. All his articulate life he has been telling what he took to be subversive and unpleasant truths. His reward has been money, a reputation for brilliancy, few converts. Then the war came. He

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did as he had always done, said what he had always said, and with the same fresh wit and energy. This time, at last, he roused thousands and thousands to fury. So his chance has come for showing, now that he is about sixty years old, the courage he would have shown all along, if he had had the chance.

APRIL, 1917.

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A SCHNITZLER STORY

BE careful what you desire in youth, said Goethe, for in old age you will get it. Be still more careful, so one thinks after reading Arthur Schnitzler's "Frau Beate und ihr Sohn," what you desire to-day unconsciously, for to-morrow you may get it, and the price you pay for it will be the defeat and ruin of everything you consciously desired. Our morality having taught us that certain desires are not to be acknowledged, even to ourselves, we keep them in our unconsciousness, where they lie in ambush. A morality less superstitious, to which ends mattered more than means, would have bidden us do our utmost to become conscious of the ambushed desire, to avow the unavowable, to give the nameless its exactest name. Some of the worst moral defeats are victories of the unconscious over the conscious. Moral victories, no less than mental, may be the reward of men and women who have taught things hidden in their unconsciousness to serve ends their will has consciously chosen.

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Although "Frau Beate und ihr Sohn," which I read for the first time the other day, is Schnitzler's newest book, it is already a year or more old. It is a story about as long as "Sterben," one of his earliest masterpieces. Sophocles, when he treated the Oedipus and Jocasta story, hid from them the fact that they were mother and son. Schnitzler keeps nothing from Beate and her son Hugo but the fact that they are in love. This they do not learn until the very end, when it is revealed to them in darkness and flame, terribly, though not at the same moment, nor by quite the same means. Slowly, by slight suggestion after slighter, you grow aware of the passion Beate is still unconscious of. She tragically misinterprets her feeling and her son's. Accompanying this central misinterpretation, playing into it, disengaging themselves from it, joining it again, lesser misinterpretations are born and live and are lost. When the number of Beate's desirers increases about her, she in good faith explains the increase by some peculiarity in the air of an unusual autumn. She does not know the cause is a longing she has, which looks out of her eyes and makes her gestures subtly obedient to

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its rhythm. She imputes her own state of mind, not knowing it for hers, and her imputations turn into realities. A desire she was unconscious of, which she would have done her best to extirpate if only she had become conscious of it early enough, which every other feeling in her would have fought against if it had come earlier into the light of consciousness, fulfils her tragedy.

In 1902, when Schnitzler's "Lebendige Stunden" had just been given at the Carl-Theater in Vienna, Hermann Bahr wrote: "Aber nun kommt das Publikum und verlangt, dass wir ihm sagen sollen, was der Dichter denn mit diesen Stücken sagen will. Darauf ist zu antworten: Wenn wir es könnten, wäre er keiner." A year later, when a revival of these one-act plays gave Bahr a chance to return to the subject, he quoted Hebbel: "Wehe dem Dichter, dessen Werk man im gemeinen Verstande kopieren kann. Er ist entweder nichts oder hat wenigstens nichts gemacht." Anything by Schnitzler that I read for the first time, whether novel, shorter story or play, gives me the feeling which Hebbel and Bahr have put

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into words. In Schnitzler the language is nearly always quite simple. Impossible not to understand, except when your German fails you, what he is saying at any given moment. Equally impossible not to feel, when you have shut the book and are marvelling at the easy path he has made for you through such intricate ravines, that you have seen the beginnings of many other paths, leading toward darker strangenesses. You have been in the deep woods, along the borderland between conscious and unconscious. From little clearings you have looked into darker regions where the light is drowned. You have been listening to fainter sounds between the louder.

A book like "Frau Beate," if we let it alone in our minds for a while after reading it, sharpens our observation of the contrast and cooperation, in ourselves and in other people, of conscious motives with unconscious. Happily for the world most of the unconscious motives we catch in the act are inadequate to tragedy. They are small things. They lead the egotist to talk of himself while believing that autobiography is only a by-product of his talk;

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lead him to judge others by what they have done and himself by what he is going to do one of these days; lead him to warm himself before praise from persons whose facility in praising he has often laughed at; lead him to assume that friends have him in mind when they are really thinking only of God. It is not often, however, that Schnitzler gives us anything so explicit to take with us from his world to ours. Seldom does he allow us to see the comedy in mortal things as a complement of their tragedy. In many of his books comedy and tragedy are perceived at almost the same moment.

Nobody puts his tragic touches and his comic touches nearer together than Schnitzler. Nobody is abler to keep the one kind from lessening the feeling created by the other. For examples of this art we must go not to "Frau Beate," but to some of his plays, say to "Komtesse Mizzi." It begins when Count Arpad, an elderly man, is losing by her marriage his mistress, an actress he has been living with for seventeen years. Count Arpad is very diverting, yet Schnitzler never lets us see him as merely absurd. Mizzi, the Count's daughter,

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is thirty-seven. With her entrance into the story we begin to see, past the adroit and amusing dialogue, a tragic background. Eighteen years ago Mizzi and Prince Egon were lovers. We see the hunting lodge, "forgotten in a forest glade and secret from the eyes of all," where their boy was born. Prince Egon's wife was alive then, and the secret was well kept. But at what a cost! Mizzi was willing to run away with Egon, but he would not. And because her boy was taken from her, in spite of all she was ready to do to keep him, she has refused to see him in these seventeen years. He thinks his mother is dead. To-day, without warning, Egon brings the boy to see Mizzi.

We should all know what to expect from such a situation, provided we did not know Schnitzler. Either the present would turn as tragic as the past, or else we should have a final scene of forgiving and forgetting. What we do see is naturally neither. The amusing dialogue goes on, more amusing than ever, quicker with comedy, and the tragic background that lies beyond it, in the past, takes more and more significant possession of our imagination. One

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who had read an outline of "Komtesse Mizzi," and who didn't otherwise know the play, would say it ended happily; for Mizzi is so unwilling to be separated from her son that she is willing even to marry his father. But readers or hearers of the play are not so deceived. Schnitzler has drawn away too many curtains. He leaves us wondering what a happiness can be like which is shared by a man and woman who know each other too well.

MARCH, 1915.

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BELOW THE AVERAGE READER

ALTHOUGH I have often travelled in the same train with you, and have sought you carefully, I am not even now certain that I know you by sight. Not in the exalted chair which should be yours, but undistinguished, unremarked, you sit obscured by your companions. Publishers and novelists and critics may think they have found you at last, and resolve to keep you under surveillance, yet every year brings its evidence that their eyes were upon the wrong woman. For you, madam, are the average reader. Upon you depends the fate of every novel. To your hands the future of the American novel, for better, for worse, has been entrusted. If you say, let there be lightness, light books will be written. If you yearn for a tragic novelist, some obliging American mother, hailing from Germany, perhaps, or Russia or Scandinavia, will before long give him birth.

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You do not, I regret to notice, appear to realize the responsibilities of your position. You are accused, sometimes contemptuously and highbrowedly, sometimes with hottest fury, of putting your powers to the poorest uses. Much you care. No fury, though hot as molten metal, can touch you, and to be highbrow-beaten you wholly refuse. At this moment, where a chivalrous volunteer is hurrying to your defense, you take no interest in my approach. It matters nothing to you whether I deny that your preference for happy endings is dictatorial, or admit this and affirm that your dictation does no great harm.

In life, which has sometimes been contrasted with literature, this liking for happy endings is one of the most innocent of your many innocencies. One day this autumn, when you were forced to change cars at a small place in the country, you stood on the station platform and watched your abandoned train pull out. Behind you there came a hurry of feet. An average man, whom you did not know from Adam, dashed by you in pursuit of that receding train. Would he make it? Would he lose

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it? You stood and watched, rather tensely rooting for that unknown man. His past might have been scarlet. His heart might be black. In some city up the line there might be a hundred guiltless men against whom your train-chaser had been concocting an after dinner speech, and who would be happier and not unwiser if he lost his train. You, while watching him sprint, thought of none of these things. You wished that man well. When he had swung aboard the last car you turned away, relaxed, relieved, nor did you stop to consider how utterly the desire for a happy ending, that well-known tyrant, had held you in thrall.

The scene changes. Winter in town. You look down from your high-built room upon the glaring street, where the lights bewilder and blind. Two illuminated surface monsters are clanging towards one another, each on its appointed track. A woman, any woman, frail if you compare her to either of the oncoming cars, tries to cross the street ahead of both. Will she be caught and dragged and mangled under your eyes? No, not she. The poor

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creature has done the impossible, she has gained the sidewalk unharmed, and you, the spectator, thank whatever gods you believe in. For you the incident has had a happy ending. And for her, too, although she may finish her evening near the radiator, opposite some sedentary, taciturn monogamist who is as sleepy as your own husband.

This is the kind of happy ending that you desire when you sit down to read. But people mistake when they say that because you have this desire they can tell what you think about life, the world, the soul. They can tell nothing of the sort. Yours is a case where a great deal of wish may imply very little opinion. You, who share Sir George Croft's "honest belief that things are making for good on the whole," have a weakness for happy endings, and so have I, though I'm not quite certain what things are making for. You would like happy endings no less if your beliefs were as vague as mine, and I should like them no more if my optimism were as symmetrical as yours. A liking for them is found among persons who see life pink, who see it black, who see it gray, and also among persons who don't see it.

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As you have already begun to suspect, if you have kindly read as far as this, I don't quarrel with your preference for happy endings. If you insisted upon unhappy endings you might tempt our novelists and publishers to quite as conventional a routine. And a tragedy which is tragedy only in intention, which supplies an abundance of death or other calamity while omitting all tragic feeling, is less excusable, in my eyes, than the staple foolish happy-ender. My quarrel is with your desire to have that man-who-caught-the-train youngish, resourceful, bold, and in love; with your desire to have that woman-who-wasn't-run-over young, in love, self-sacrificing and devoted to an ailing mother. I suspect you, besides, of not considering love curiously enough. Richard Wagner was more exacting. He said that only the love of the strong for the strong was love, and he made a list of the imitations—such as the love of the strong for the weak, of the weak for the weak, of the weak for the strong. He called for what he deemed the real thing, and would accept no inferior substitute. Aren't you perhaps a little too ready to accept anything that's labelled love and anything that's labelled happiness?

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One of these days, when I unfold my morning paper and learn from the help-wanted column that the position of creator is vacant, I shall apply for the job. Not long after organizing my staff I shall set about re-creating the average reader. To me this shall be as near a concern as the ordering of my food. Under my altering hand she shall lose a little of her fondness for meeting standardized feeling in new settings. She shall be pleased to meet new feeling in settings new or old. She will enjoy watching the oldest feelings in the world turn, as she sees them through the novelist's observing and self-observing eye, to newness. Books which not only talk about love, but which consider and communicate it, shall be dear to her; books where—as in Mr. Galsworthy's "The Dark Flower"—love itself is the subject, and where the lover is, and is meant to be, only a glass into which life pours different-colored passions.

But the average reader, when these and other alterations had been completed, would still retain many of her existing traits. Although she would demand strangeness in her novels, al-

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though she would insist upon having her manly men less like one another than they have been in the past, I should not insist upon her foregoing her attachment to manly men, womanly women, self-abnegators, high ideals and elemental feelings. I shouldn't even require of her a suspicious attitude toward big subjects. By letting her keep these preferences I should hope to avoid the weakness of re-creating her in my own image, a weakness which has cramped more than one creator's style.

DECEMBER, 1914.

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REVIEWING RUSSIA

HOW does one set about writing the history of a literature? One way is to take any language you know and read its literature chronologically. Through absorbed eager hours, critically detached hours, hours of boredom, you accomplish your hellish purpose. But for your will to write you often wouldn't read, and yet you keep at it, your purpose growing. Excitedly you write of two authors between whom you have discovered hidden correspondencies. But for this discovery you would have had little to say of either. As you proceed you acquire momentum. Johnson's "Irene" does not stop you, nor "The Curse of Kehama." Before you have mastered your material you have learned to read, not without interest, anything out of which copy can be made. That is one way of preparing yourself to write the history of a literature. The other way is to have read the whole of it before the idea of writing its history entered your head. Neither way is ever followed. Literary historians have always read a

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good deal of their subject, and have never read it all, before resolving to write. Of Mr. Maurice Baring, whose "Outline of Russian Literature," published in the Home University Library by Messrs. Henry Holt & Company, I am about to read, it is safe to guess that his book will sound as if most of his reading had been done to amuse himself. Before beginning it, however, let me see what deposit a little reading of Russian authors has left in my head.

It was Russia leather, I believe, which taught me that such a country as Russia existed. To other leather it bore the same relation that guava jelly did to jellies of commoner sort. Then came stories of Siberia and of the steppes, and the story of the man who was pursued by a pack of wolves as he drove his sledge, and who saved himself by tossing his children, one after another, to the wolves. A large Russian match-box, picturing men and women in long clothes of splendor, arrived one day, and thenceforth sat on our library table and glowed. Out of such odds and ends Russia made itself inside my head—a Russia of far horizons you drove toward, endlessly, across yellow plains that were

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not quite flat; of bright lacquer-like peasants, bending to their tasks in forests and shadowed spots in villages; of winter days as cold as the ice-brook, when you reached the forest at night-fall, and heard howling all about you, and saw the hungry pack as you crossed open spaces of hard moonlight. The next morning you would be off again on your sledge, the forest left behind now, and drive all day toward the Volga, and all the next day and the next over creaking snow, days when there were no low winds, for a wonder, and the clouds, high up, seemed to go of themselves. Terrible to me, a little later, were the images made by such words as anarchist, nihilist, exile, the knout. I never quite believed the things they stood for existed in the older Russia I seemed always to have known.

Since those early days the Russia inside my head has changed several times, but it is always the work of chance. The lean wolves are not less lean, but they have withdrawn from the centre of the picture, and young children are no longer their staple food. Russians exist whose days are not all passed in sledges or exile, who

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have other occupations than bomb-throwing or sternest repression of revolt. For a while I saw them as men who dreamed their lives away, who hoped and felt and couldn't make decisions and regretted. The strayed sportsman lay on the earth all night by the open fire, making believe he was asleep, listening while the boys talked, listening to old superstitions refreshed by youngest believers. From time to time he heard the feet of the horses the boys were keeping in that vast meadow. Or he smelled the earth at daybreak, smelled the seasons, heard at the end of winter the sound of waters released on a night of sudden Russian spring—springs as sudden and beautiful as the decisions made by Russian women in love. Women to whom love says, "Who chooses me must give and hazard all he hath," and who do not hesitate. Men who feel deeply, whose indecision leads them to act like tepid souls, and who are not tepid, who always remember, in bitterness, impotently.

A little later Russia began to change fast. It contained more kinds of men and women than I had been able to see in my real world, more

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kinds than any novelist I knew had seen in his. They were seen more directly. The same unobstructed gaze was turned toward their appearance, their gestures, their sensations of heat and cold, their shyest motives, their illusions, their most experienced thought. You felt the confusion of crowds, of battles, as you feel things here and now. Love's birth and growth and decline were laid bare with a clearness that was not unreal. The greatest novelist in the world, you would have said, if only his seekers after truth had not found what they sought. He made all other novelists, even the other Russian, sound arranged. Next came, strangest of all, the master of hallucination, in comparison with whose intensity your own life seems unrealized, unlived. His fevered, tortured, life-twisted creatures, upon whom their creator spends his incomparable treasure of pity and love, obsess you as you were never obsessed by yourself. When you emerge again into your own world you are aware, for a while, that its sounds come muffled, that you touch it with numb fingers.

MARCH, 1915.

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ANNA REVISITED

A FEW pages of "Anna Karenina," when I read it for the first time thirty years ago, were quite enough to convince me that it was the greatest novel in the world. Many of the other greatest novels in the world were still to read. I admitted the fact. But this conscious ignorance could not shake my faith. I had been travelling, and was making a stay in a part of the United States which I had never seen, which I innocently called "the west," and which offered to curiosity, on the shore of Lake Ontario, people, occupations, manners, habits, landscape that were all unfamiliar. This curiosity had been strong, but it could not compete with the feeling awakened by "Anna Karenina," which effaced the pale real world, brought one into unbelievably close contact with so much life, gave one a hundred new thirsts and freedoms. What novel short of the greatest could cause effects like these?

Imagine your first meeting with a woman

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whose loveliness and grace and radiance outshone the brightest that your experience had given you hope of seeing, a woman who drank joy from deep-hidden springs. Imagine, if you can, your emotion when she turned into a cannibal. Imagine the later events of her history combining to prove that cannibalism wrecked, broke, destroyed her, while all the time her charm could not die, but lived on so clear and unspoiled that your opinion of cannibalism underwent great change, and a new tolerance flooded your soul. For "cannibalism" read "adultery." I had been brought up to regard adultery as I now regard the most German of atrocities, plus the warning that it was a thing never to be named, except at morning service. Not for a moment was Anna the kind of woman whom I had been taught to think the only kind who ever committed adultery. For this access of tolerance my education, it is only fair to say, had been an unintentional preparation. Without at all meaning to, my elders had turned my curiosity about sex away from all relations sanctioned by the church and had concentrated it, timid and fascinated, upon illicitness. All things considered, my misreading of the story

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of Anna and Vronsky, my misplacing of the emphasis, was natural enough.

Thirty years ago, being in love with Anna, I was as a matter of course persuaded of Vronsky's unworthiness. This conviction lived at peace with the conviction that I had rather resemble Vronsky than Levin, and that Vronsky's imperturbability, his haughtiness when interrupted at breakfast by brother-officers whom he did not like, his indifference to criticism, were as inimitable as his good looks. His character and appearance were food for despair, and one turned to Levin for comfort, not in vain. Here was a man shy and awkward in company, confused when he made the same remark twice, a maker and breaker of resolutions, yet nowise despicable, a man liked and even loved.

> The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,
> Is—not to fancy what were fair in life
> Provided it could be—but, finding first
> What may be, then find how to make it fair
> Up to our means: a very different thing!

I had read this: I had tried to believe it. Levin's character and destiny was a concrete proof that the problem was not insoluble, that one's means might be good enough.

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Yet nobody's egotism, even at nineteen, could be so blind as not to see that "Anna Karenina" was other things than a consoler and liberator and disheartener of one's self. It was the whole of life, it was a house of death and birth, it was a place where the every-day miracles revealed their graver meanings. Watching by the death-bed of Levin's brother one saw, listening to Kitty's cry in childbirth one heard, with a distinctness rare in one's own sensations, the nearness of man to the other animals. All the sudden poetry of spring, changing Levin's heart with the change of season, taught one to know, as one knows cold or heat or pain, man's nearness to earth. Even at nineteen, however, I was troubled because Levin, the seeker, came so near finding the meaning of life. I remember suspecting that one part of life was to go on wondering forever what life might mean.

Unless one is more than common stupid, which few of us think ourselves, thirty years make large changes in most great books. In advance of experience one craves substitutes for it. Later one cannot help looking for likenesses and contrasts between the book and experience. But "Anna Karenina" is not this kind of great

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book. To a young reader it is one of these substitutes for experience which immediately become part of experience, so that one of the things you compare it with and test it by, after no matter how many years, is itself. And it has no secrets. All the abundant life in it is seen with the last distinctness, represented with concise explicitness. The steeplechase which Vronsky loses, and which breaks Frou Frou's back, is not more distinctly seen than those obscurer places, in Anna's soul or Levin's, upon which Tolstoi turns his amazing daylight. Last week, when I had re-read "Anna Karenina," this was the new impression I most noticed, that I was over-acquainted with the principal characters, that they were all too distinctly exhibited, that there were no planes in these landscapes of the soul and no lost lines, that nobody's unconscious had any privacy.

This was not, of course, the only impression I felt as new. For the first time I noticed how carefully Tolstoi builds up his case against adultery, how artfully he represents it as capable of doing thoroughly frivolous men and women no harm, how cautiously he keeps his Christian distrust of the flesh from appearing on any page

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that tells of Anna and Vronsky, how different Anna's fate might have been if Vronsky had had a passion for excavating buried cities, or for anticipating Mr. Edison. The first time I read the book I accepted submissively the words Tolstoi put at the head of its first chapter—"vengeance is mine, I will repay." To-day his "moral" seems better expressed in this passage from Santayana: "Love itself dreams of more than mere possession; to conceive happiness, it must conceive a life to be shared in a varied world, full of events and activities, which shall be new and ideal bonds between the lovers. But unlawful love cannot pass out into this public fulfilment. It is condemned to be mere possession—possession in the dark, without an environment, without a future. It is love among the ruins . . . love among the ruins of themselves and of all else they might have had to give to one another."

Is "Anna Karenina" the greatest novel in the world? No, the world has not seen and probably never will see its greatest novel. But the phrase is not always vile. It often serves to express a feeling for which no other words will do so well, a feeling that is even stronger in

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me, I think, while I read "War and Peace" or "Crime and Punishment." Does "Anna Karenina" contain the whole of life? Of course not, yet this phrase too serves to express, with just exaggeration, a reader's wonder at the many living men and women whom Tolstoi created, only a few in his own image. But a re-reader, though he may not feel that much life has been left out of "Anna Karenina," cannot help feeling, at the present moment, that Tolstoi left out a good deal of Russia.

JULY, 1918.

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TENNYSON

A FEW weeks ago, while reading Mr. Mackail's introduction to "The Pervigilium Veneris," which he translated for the Loeb Classical Library, I came upon these lines, describing what happens to a poet when his poem begins to form itself:

> The fairy fancies range,
> And, lightly stirred,
> Ring little bells of change
> From word to word.

The quotation did not seem quite unfamiliar, yet I could not remember its source. Tennyson? It didn't sound like Tennyson, either to me or to the four or five persons I consulted. Each of us had what he thought a good reason for being almost certain the lines were not Tennyson. I hunted without success through a one-volume Tennyson containing all of him except his very latest work. When I got back to New York, where books are, I remembered why I thought the lines were Tennyson's, looked in Mr. Mackail's Latin Lit-

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erature, found they were from a Tennyson spring poem. The rest of the way was not difficult. Short lines, spring—these signs led before long to "Early Spring," in the volume called "Tiresias and Other Poems." The poem has eight stanzas, of which these are the sixth and seventh:

Past, Future glimpse and fade
  Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
  Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, now frail,
  In sound and smell!

Till at thy chuckled note,
  Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
  And, lightly stirred,
Ring little bells of change
  From word to word.

Why did three or four persons, who had read a good deal of Tennyson when they were young, and all of whom were forty or more, feel certain that the lines quoted by Mr. Mackail didn't sound like Tennyson? Because for most of them, as for many other persons of their generation, Tennyson had faded to a voluntarily and smoothly noble poet whose moral world they detested. While hunting for "the fairy fancies" I naturally read a little here and a little there,

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and so refreshed my antipathy to Tennyson as a critic of life. No doubt many persons, at a first reading of the "Idylls of the King," thought Arthur's reply to Guinevere, at their final meeting, was the real thing:

> "And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I
> Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
> Forgives."

To-day one merely feels that a man who talked like that deserved all he got, and a bit more. And to-day, on re-reading "Enoch Arden," one cannot help recalling Walter Bagehot's summary of the story: "A sailor who sells fish breaks his leg, gets dismal, gives up selling fish, goes to sea, is wrecked on a desert island, stays there some years, on his return finds his wife married to a miller, speaks to a landlady on the subject, and dies." I suppose ten intelligent persons re-read Tennyson's description of Enoch's island, with its many-colored tropical splendors, for one who re-reads the whole poem for its story. Only a malicious person cares to read the closing lines:

> So past the strong heroic soul away.
> And when they buried him the little port
> Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

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Some of Tennyson's most wonderful pictures, especially sea-pictures, are framed in his blank verse. But he is no such master of blank verse as Shelley. And although Tennyson's blank verse is his own, it is also Calverley's in the parody:

> Thus on he prattled like a babbling brook.
> Then I, "The sun hath slipt behind the hill,
> And my Aunt Vivian dines at half past six."
> So in all love we parted; I to the Hall,
> They to the village. It was nois'd next noon
> That chickens had been miss'd at Syllabub Farm.

Still, I don't see why more of my contemporaries cannot read Tennyson with pleasure, in spite of his unsalted pictures of moral perfection, his grave domestic answers to unanswerable moral questions, the complacency of his willingness to "forfeit the beast with which we are crossed," the many lines that might have been written by a gifted and meditative curate. While reading you must accept or forget the fact that Tennyson's moral world is a very orderly garden, that the poet himself is a thoroughly domesticated animal. You must read Tennyson for the beauty of the parts, overlooking the moral poverty of the whole, thankful that the parts are so often whole poems. And

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it is worth while to remember that Tennyson is filled with things that don't sound like the unreal Tennyson your memory has erected in his dishonor. True, he did model a King Arthur out of blancmange, but he also called the body "this little city of sewers." And it is fair to ask, when Tennyson's Arthur seems more than you can bear, what Tennyson's Ulysses would have thought of Arthur.

Even if Tennyson was a tame animal in the moral world, he was also a dead shot at wild nature. He looked at wild or cultivated nature, saw it exactly, sketched it in words, turned his sketches into quintessential pictures:

> One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
> You seem'd to hear them climb and call
> And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
> Beneath the windy wall.
>
> And one, a full-fed river winding slow
> By herds upon an endless plain,
> The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
> With shadow-streaks of rain.

Among English poets Milton is the only greater master of consonants, of the l, m, n, r out of which English verse can be built so as to sound a little of imperial Rome. At the moment when Tennyson's eye saw nature his ear heard

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verse, and later, when he had retouched the verse into that curious felicity he loved so well, when he had distilled and elaborated it into a rich and learned magic, the picture his eye had seen was still there, unspoiled by this elaborate selective process, exacter than ever. As a nature poet he spoke the language science would use if she had a Latin ear and could sing.

AUGUST, 1915.

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BROWNING

EVERY now and then, and always with surprise, I hear one of my contemporaries remark that he or she cannot read Robert Browning nowadays. The emphasis is usually on the last word. Twenty or twenty-five years ago the speaker could and did read Browning with joy. My renewed surprise is always at the fact of change. Excepting Tennyson, there is no Victorian poet about whom my opinion has changed less. Possibly I now resent more wearily Tennyson's somehow-trustfulness that good will be the final goal of ill, and find the exceptional blamelessness of his blameless-stainless king a little harder to bear. Perhaps I groan louder when he says "we needs must love the highest when we see it." Certainly I get more pleasure than I did from his nature poetry, and especially from the art with which his longer landscapes are composed. Certainly there is an increase in my admiration of his "lonely word." If "Hallowed be Thy name—Hallelujah!" seems even worse than it used to

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seem, yet this water-picture seems even more exactly lovely:

> So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,
> As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
> The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
> In silence.

Forasmuch as Tennyson had Tennyson's eye for the visible world, and Tennyson's ear, we forgive his docile piety, forgive him for degrading life to the level of duty, for wishing to spiritualize our animal nature, for his invincible nobility. But here there is little change. Hasn't this been the orthodox attitude toward Tennyson for thirty years?

As for Browning's detractors, in the two or three cases I've investigated, the explanations were a good deal alike. Browning was remembered as a believer in personal immortality, a wholesome oppressive optimist, a welcomer of each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough. Worse yet, said my informants, he is an ingenious optimist who seeks to justify his point of view by endless frightful ratiocination. When we were twenty we liked optimism. We don't like it now. My answer, so far as I had any, did not

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prosper. I began by admitting that perhaps Browning, who sees this world as made up of so many things, sees it most of all as a gymnasium, from which you pass, after gallant arduous exercise of all your muscles, into a sort of everlasting track and field day, where you will break all your worldly records, swim farther under water than you ever swam here, run faster, jump higher, chin yourself more times. Nor can any one deny that Browning is optimistic. What may be doubted is that "optimist" is always and necessarily a term of reproach. An optimist is a nuisance, of course, who folds his hands and meekly concludes, no matter what happens, that God knows what is best for us. So is the optimist who loses his train, unregretfully watches its rear coach dwindle, and turns homeward saying, "All's right with the world. After all, more people caught that train than lost it."

But Browning is no docile folder of hands. If he lost his train he would probably swear. If he were standing within earshot when you lost yours, and if you swore at all competently, he would listen to your words. His optimism,

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whether you like it or not, is his. It accumulates in him by a function prodigiously natural. Quite as natural are his ingenious repeated attempts to justify it. He is driven by no sense of duty, but only by a robust enjoyment of the game, when he defends his faith, which was only a normal self-expression, by arguments as erudite and hair-splitting as a scholastic's. Daring to be yourself is a form of courage much in vogue. To give elaborate endless reasons for daring to be yourself may be, and with Browning it is, merely one way more of being yourself. His hope of a better world wasn't rooted in an under-estimate of this, for which his appetite was catholic and enormous. Although he believes that God's ends justify God's means, this belief was not essential to his enjoyment of the world. For him, if the ends hadn't justified the means, the means would have justified themselves. If he hadn't found life good he would still have found it just as interesting. And he was a passionate and rather fair-minded student of evidence against his favorite beliefs. I admire the accident which united a keen appetite for life with a mind eager to justify to itself things which this appetite had o.k.'d, and yet patient

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to hear the other side. Browning, with an appetite for life so eager that he would be excusable if he had taken the goodness of the world for granted, does not offer us marked-down faith, bargains in courage, optimism at half-price.

To me the most irritating of all optimisms is the one which has its roots in reason alone. An anaemic sedentary man, who never puffs and sweats, who can't tell a double play from a thirty-foot putt or cut-plug from shag, loses through inability to value the parts of life all authority when he tries to value the whole. But Browning's athletic argumentative intellect was merely seeking a basis in reason for certain affirmations made by his senses and his imagination and his love of scholarship. In many of his poems, he does, I admit, state the case for God. This habit gives offense in many quarters. The offended persons forget that Browning was almost equally ready to state the case for anybody else, for a grammarian, a faultless painter, a Latin-loving sixteenth-century bishop, a cheating medium, the Third Napoleon. It is no more than decent to remember, when next you are

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tempted to blame him for thinking all's right with the world, that he had first-hand evidence for thinking many of the world's details equally all right. By his incessant curious interest in life he acquired a momentum which carried him past his signals plump into a belief in immortality.

However, all this is no answer to people who genuinely don't like to find in poetry beliefs which are not theirs. No answer can be given except by persuading them to re-read the Browning they used to like. Only by doing this can they realize that although he welcomed each rebuff he welcomed a lot of other things—a sunset-touch, a chorus ending from Euripides. His faith was no preference for the high road. It didn't keep him from alertly exploring the byways of doubt, and liking the wild flowers that grow in such places. Although this great poet was a tremendous believer he was also a tremendous enjoyer, a man who wore a top hat in London, dined out, talked profusely and a little too well, loved English country, Italian country, Italian towns, pictures, Greek, music, liberty, history, the queerest kinks in the queer-

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est minds. And I can't remember against him a case where his faith got between him and the particular things he was looking at, or where his love of loyalty kept him from noting the concrete oddity of the particular manifestation of loyalty that happened to be engaging his attention. After all, some of us have no strong objection to faiths we don't share. "Sterling and I," says Carlyle, "walked westward in company, choosing whatever lanes or quietest streets there were, as far as Knightsbridge where our roads parted; talking on moralities, theological philosophies; arguing copiously, but except in opinion not disagreeing."

MAY, 1915.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD

A SOBER green volume, lately published by the Oxford University Press, and called "Essays by Matthew Arnold," reminds me of an evening I spent, almost thirty years ago, in the smoking-room of a German hotel, where I had no business. If anybody had asked me why I'd left my pension in another part of Dresden, and was hanging about that smoking-room, too young to give myself a status there by ordering a drink, I should not have told the truth. Mr. Matthew Arnold, who was inspecting the schools of Saxony, was staying in that hotel, and I hoped he might come to the smoking-room after dinner. At that moment there was nothing I wanted quite so much as to see him and to hear him talk. At last he entered. At last he talked. It would have been hard for me to say whether his appearance or his talk was the deeper disappointment. He sat down near a French actress, but what he said to her did not sound at all like "Faster, faster, O Circe, Goddess!" He said, "Avez-vous bien dormi?" Of

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Hungary, where he had lately been a circuitous wanderer, he merely remarked that in one town, where his host had an English wife, he had been very comfortable. Although he spoke of Virgil, he didn't even allude to the sense of tears in mortal things. He recited three or four lines of the Aeneid, just to illustrate by imitation the charmlessness with which English schoolboys pronounced Latin.

Young enough to feel disappointed, I was not young enough to stay so. After a few bitter days I began to admit that the best that is known and thought in the world cannot always be propagated after dinner, that sad lucidity of soul may be inappropriate to a hotel smoking-room. Being determined to recover from the Hebraism with which seventeen New England years had afflicted me, to let my stock notions dissolve, to acquire Hellenism, I was soon afloat again upon the stream of Matthew Arnold's thinking. It would have been difficult for me at that time to measure my gratitude to him. I was eager to part with what he took away, eager to receive what he gave. Most of my contemporaries had been overexposed to divine worship, and what

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was most irksome in the Christianity then prevalent in New England, a rather bleak inflexible Christianity, Matthew Arnold gently and insistently effaced. The Greece he bade us look to and learn from was not the Greece revealed to the youth of to-day by Gilbert Murray and Alfred Zimmern. It was quieter, simpler, more serene, more nearly stationary, *marmor-schöner*. Its differences from our own epoch were less perplexing, its superiorities to our epoch more incontestable. Matthew Arnold's Greece was above all more edifying than Mr. Zimmern's or Mr. Gilbert Murray's. It was adequate to the task of seeing us safely through the contemporary world, of insuring us against being made dull by business or wild by passion.

Seventeen is doubtless the proper age for a deliberate re-valuation of life. Matthew Arnold, who would have detested such a phrase, helped us re-value life not only by what he wrote but by what he was. We knew that he was inordinately busy, and that business had not dulled his brightness. We knew that neither passion nor anything else had made him wild. His serenity was indisputable. Looking back now,

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I rather marvel at our admiration of it. Only very mild youngsters could have been satisfied with a serenity which such a temperate tumult had preceded. His early desire to learn and to discriminate was reinforced so soon by a desire to teach that he hadn't much time left for tumult. He was a man in whom the didactic impulse, no matter what the substance of his teaching had been, would have said "Peace, be still," to his other impulses. We were oddly ready, it seems to me, to believe his other impulses as strong and as hard to manage as he thought them. We were a little slow to understand that one of the surest ways not to see life whole is to see it too steadily. We had been puzzled by his assertion that poetry is a criticism of life. Some of us thought it a hard saying. None of us realized how near Matthew Arnold came to believing that life itself is a criticism of life.

"His foot is in the *vera vita,* his eye on the beatific vision." The *vera vita* Matthew Arnold looked forward to and worked for was an ordered life, equable, salutary, curious, humane, discriminating, led by men and women who had

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plenty of time left for culture. Time left from what? From the unavoidable activities and routines which he somewhat neglected. This neglect is one of the reasons why the present younger generation, knocking at the usual place, so seldom asks at the door for Mr. Matthew Arnold, who did not distinguish between the better ways and the worse, the more wholesome and the less, in which these unavoidable activities and routines may be pursued; who was incurious as to the possibility of reducing, for pretty much everybody, the proportion of life that must be given over to these activities. "The best man," so he quotes the Socrates of the Memorabilia, "is he who most tries to perfect himself." Nowadays the younger generation prefers to get its definition from Schopenhauer, who says the mark of a good man is "dass er weniger, als sonst geschiet, ein Unterschied macht zwischen sich und anderen." You must cure people of poverty before you can profitably set about teaching them the best that has been known and thought in the world. To make life as bearable for all of us as it now is for some of us—here, and not upon self-culture, our younger generation puts its characteristic emphasis.

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Well, the next best thing to being young is remembering that youth was once our privilege. It is pleasant to remember what Matthew Arnold did for some of us, who were young in the last century's eighties. He bettered our enjoyment of books. He made us feel, rather intimately, the presence or the absence of the grand style, natural magic, fluidity and sweet ease, the lyrical cry. He gave us the illusion that we too were incapable of confusing elegance and nobleness, of mistaking *simplesse* for *simplicité*. With what confidence we used to distinguish, in those early days, between the best and the not quite so good! What days were those, Parmenides, when we scorned the attempt to put upon the tail of any bird any salt that was not Attic! Conscious as we then were of Greek aspirations and Greek avoidances, of a desire to recapture and to domesticate the accent of Greek prose, we were just beginning to be aware, uneasily, of giant shapes of distance away in the north, of dim Russian and Scandinavian masters, portentous and modern, soon to grow distinct and unescapable, soon to make us forget the pure lines of Ionian horizons, the liquid clearness of Ionian skies. Surely it

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honors Matthew Arnold that he was able to feel, almost at the end of his life, the new greatness of one of these northern masters, whose advent made us realize that the best that has been thought and said in the world is an unfinished thing.

JANUARY, 1915.

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SWINBURNE

DO undergraduates read Swinburne nowadays? Judging from a sample chosen here and there I should say that they don't. They know "When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces," and "In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland," and "Shall I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel," but they do not take long drinks of Swinburne, out of schooners, as we did between twenty-five and thirty years ago. I do not mean that even in my day all Harvard undergraduates read Swinburne, or that even to the most decadent among us he was ever a major god. But we could read him in his own tongue, as we could not read Ibsen or Tolstoi, and he added to the excitements in life. The women with whom he brought us acquainted were brilliantly unlike the charming girls whom we took to football games or danced with, of a Saturday evening, at Papanti's, and who never appeared, no matter how oddly their mothers chose to dress them, either in raiment of dyed sendaline or clothed

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about with flame and tears. Along the water side of Beacon Street, in the late eighties, walked few feet shod with adder-skin. And in Swinburne the talk was different. I cannot remember hearing a Harvard student tell his partner that she laughed "with a savor of blood in her face, and a savor of guile," or call her "my snake with bright bland eyes." In Boston and its environs the proportion of mystery was no doubt what it usually is where young women and young men are gathered together, but it was an innocent natural mystery.

Sin was the specialty of the Swinburne who wrote "Poems and Ballads," the volume with which, as being the cause of most scandal and cry, we were naturally most familiar. We knew him as the young poet who had set the Thames on fire, in eighteen sixty-something, with his song. He fell among women, and "I say, Archer, my God, what women!" Although they lived in a world so remote from ours that we could reach it only by a long leap, Swinburne's rhythms furnished the necessary springboard. He never degraded Lust by treating it as mere Love. By representing desire as a

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thing of sin he enabled us, who had been taught to associate these two, to feel ourselves not so far from home after all. Thus in time we could habituate ourselves to his surprising women, who had subtle-colored hair, eyes like the eyes of a dove that sickeneth, mouths that made the blood beat in feverish rhymes, mouths like fervent amorous roses, and whose kisses were rapturous, venomous, poisonous and prolonged. These women lived in a land where the kisses that were given and received had fangs and bit and drew blood, and yet a certain restricted freedom of choice was open to us. Even here there were women and women. Not even here was every sin as scarlet. Monday, Wednesday and Friday, lips darker than purple kisses. Tuesday, Thursday and (at the pleasure of the lover) Saturday, the pallid lips of old Semiramisses.

Sin was the many-colored garment in which these ladies, wrapping themselves about, sought to hide their monotony from our eyes. And so for a while we were illuded. It takes time to perceive the sad sameness of strange sins. It takes time to perceive the tedium of days divided

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thus: Sin, eight hours; sleep, eight hours; sundries, eight hours. The only way to tell these sinners apart was to consult the column marked "sundries," about which Swinburne had nothing to tell us. In "Le Prince d'Aurec," at a fancy dress ball, a lady got up as Marion Delorme makes her entrance with words like these: "Many men loved me, each in his own way; and I loved them all, in the same way." When at last we saw that all his ladies were desperately the same in their loves we shut his book, we left behind his land of anapaests and dense air, we discovered that our own country had its good side, that we breathed deeply with ease in it, that after so much unrelieved heavy brightness its cooler and varied colors interested our eyes. But the best escape of all was from a routine strangeness out into a world where strangeness was accidental, welcome, unexpected, and where no two strangenesses were alike.

Is it because an older reader is offended by the sameness of Swinburne's women that Swinburne is not easy to read continually nowadays? Partly for that reason, no doubt, and partly

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because few older readers have kept a consciousness of sin. I often do things I wish I had not done, just as I leave undone things I ought to have written promptly and dropped in the mail-box. I am cowardly, procrastinating, evasive, slothful, but the nearest I ever come to feeling sinful is when I get a letter which looks like an assertion that my account is overdrawn, and which often turns out to be nothing but praise of some new beauty in the high-grade security line. Lacking the essential feeling, I sometimes feel, when I pick up "Poems and Ballads," first series, that the poet's purple and scarlet passions hardly deserved to be called sins, that they are no more sinful than a gilt and plush sunset, and that a man who insists so much on the wickedness and shamefulness of his desires probably overestimates their strength.

This explanation has the merit of accounting for the neglect of Swinburne by the present crop of undergraduates, many of whom have been brought up as if there were no such thing as sin in this universe. Not being equipped with the needful illusion, they find out sooner than we did that almost all Swinburne's intellectual journeys were only from heaven to hell, from lilies

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to roses, from night to day, from life to death, from tyranny to liberty, and back again, and that upon none of these journeys did he see much that he hadn't noticed the first time. He did not make too much of these contrasts, but he made what he could of them too often.

Or else—is it possible—can it be—that the wise youth of to-day, knowing so many things so early, know this also in advance of experience, namely, that wickedness, even in woman, is not the whole of life, and that the most unchaste woman in the world may be otherwise uninteresting? Or perhaps it is Swinburne's lack of structure that repels them? Often you wonder, as you read on and on, whether his habit was not to start a poem with some fragment that occurred of itself, and then to make more fragments in the same metre, until his ear desired another metre, when he would take what he had written, choose a first stanza and a last, and let the others arrange themselves. What are they like, these long and structureless poems, as empty of meaning as of movement from mood to mood? They are like blown fires that spread without arriving, like champing swift horses

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always in the same place, like huge elusive bellying sails that the mind cannot furl. The emptiness is filled with lines that call and clang, with a rushing wind of rhythm, with a musical movement repeated and repeated until it gets into one's blood, and the pulse beats to its measure, and long after the wind has blown itself out the waves keep up their rolling and washing.

SEPTEMBER, 1916.

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"THE WAY OF ALL FLESH"

WHEN was the right moment to advertise one's liking for "The Way of All Flesh"? Shaw's preface to "Major Barbara" was not published until 1907. The second English edition of Butler's novel was not published until 1908, and in the next year or so a few copies found their way to this country. These were still so few by 1910 or '11 that if you talked big about Butler people were not impressed. Nevertheless, there must have been a golden moment when the observers of "The Way of All Flesh" were still few enough to be distinguished and already many enough to make themselves heard. This moment has gone. We are to-day that next generation whom Butler wrote for, and we find his novel easy to understand and a little old-fashioned and immensely stimulating. Here is the first American edition, published by Messrs. E. P. Dutton & Company, well printed, price a dollar and a half, a book to buy, to read, to keep and not to lend.

On the paper cover which protects the blue

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cloth binding there is a quotation from Arnold Bennett, to whom Mr. Robert H. Davis had said: "Do you know a novel called 'The Way of All Flesh'?" And Mr. Bennett answered: "I do. It is one of the great novels of the world." Such praise is useful because coming from Mr. Bennett it makes people want to read. Such praise is harmless because Butler is so lively that after you have read a few pages you stop wondering why Mr. Bennett dragged greatness in. You forget that Butler's novel is unlike what you were led by Mr. Bennett's praise to expect. It is unlike any other novel either great or small. It is like a wise selection from the Note-Books of Samuel Butler, arranged at first as a Pontifex family history and at the end as a biography of Ernest Pontifex.

These Pontifexes, who started in a small way, rise into a higher air of public school, Cambridge, fixed incomes and holy orders. Most of the dramatis personae look safe enough if you judge them by their labels, but you soon discover that the labels do not mean to Butler what they meant to most English novelists in 1880. His school teachers like teaching because it is

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tyranny made easy, and not for any other reason. His young men take holy orders reluctantly, because they have not courage enough and imagination enough to resist family pressure. His husbands and wives, who normally have married without love, endure each other well or ill, as the case may be. Parents dislike their children and never acknowledge to themselves that this dislike exists and controls their decisions. Children are slow to acknowledge how sincerely they detest their parents. Small incomes look up admiringly to large incomes, and large incomes respect one another. Rare is the man who has the eye to perceive or the realism to own what he genuinely feels.

Ernest Pontifex's career is a shock to his self-deceiving people. It begins in the ordinary way, it follows the ordinary routine through public school and Cambridge to holy orders, for which he has no turn. But after taking holy orders Ernest does and suffers strange things. He goes to prison for six months because, in the words of the judge who sentences him: "It is not likely that in the healthy atmosphere of such a school as Roughborough you can have come across contaminating influences; you were probably, I

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may say certainly, impressed at school with the heinousness of any attempt to depart from the strictest chastity until such time as you had entered into a state of matrimony. . . . For the last four or five months you have been a clergyman, and if a single impure thought had still remained within your mind, ordination should have removed it; nevertheless, not only does it appear that your mind is as impure as though none of the influences to which I have referred had been brought to bear upon it, but it seems as though their only result had been this —that you have not even the common sense to be able to distinguish between a respectable girl and a prostitute." Soon after getting out of prison Ernest marries a prostitute named Ellen, who used to be his mother's maid, and with her sets up a small second-hand clothing shop. He is in despair when he learns that Ellen is a drunkard, and overjoyed when he learns that she has a husband living. When the novel closes Ernest is in possession of a fortune, he knows what he likes and what he dislikes, and he gives himself to the writing of unpopular books which a later generation will appreciate. But this happy ending is not arbitrary, for we

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have known since page 168 that Ernest would come into a fortune at twenty-eight.

This story is told and commented upon by an active-minded somebody who is Butler himself, who has Butler's humor and wit, his power of shrewd contentious observation, his surprising first-hand common sense. This narrator is the partisan of one point of view, Samuel Butler's own. To his habit of observing with his own eyes he owes his discovery that life is absolutely unlike what the romanticists and sentimentalists have told him about it, and his attention becomes the slave of this discovery. He literally cannot pay attention to any motive or any act or any feeling which might weaken his faith. For the romantic and the sentimental illusion he has substituted a hard-headed illusion of his own. He has the keenest nose for evidence that strengthens his case, and in the presence of any other kind of evidence he loses his sense of smell. No other novelist with a mind has such an unpliable mind. Life can no longer either astonish or puzzle him. It never contradicts itself. It is always the good dependable raw material for comment delivered in a voice quietly and uniformly nipping.

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Butler has excluded from his novel all those isolated mountain-top feelings which first gave the romanticists the tip for their convention that the levels are like the high spots. He has excluded everything indistinct. He does incline, to be sure, to the view "that it is our less conscious thoughts and our less conscious actions which mainly mould our lives, and the lives of those who spring from us." I am not familiar enough with his other writings to know what this view did to his thinking, but it has done almost nothing to "The Way of All Flesh," where there is neither darkness nor dimness nor sudden light, where the same light falls equally upon all parts of a world as clear as one would be which contained only conscious actions and conscious thoughts.

And yet, although Butler's self-made dissent from conventional beliefs does rather monotonously dictate to him, does keep him out of the class of perfectly free observers, the details of his dissent are endlessly amusing and original. Every now and then his observation sounds forced, but even if it never had been, and even if he had lived in a world about which nobody had ever told him any lies, he would still have

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acquired the belief in which "The Way of All Flesh" is rooted. This belief, as valid for the real confusing world as for Butler's simplified world, is a belief that hardly anybody knows what he likes and how he feels, and that for everybody the beginning of wisdom is to find out.

JULY, 1916.

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AN IMMORTAL WRITER

IN the Encyclopaedia Britannica, eleventh edition, only forty-seven lines are given to Miss Marie Corelli, and only twenty to Mr. Hall Caine. Good, you say, for the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Ah, my guileless friend, "there did I wait for thee," with malice up my sleeve, knowing that this same work of reference says, in the article called "Caricature:" "The work of Mr. Max Beerbohm ('Max') has the note of originality and extravagance too." In the article on English literature in the nineteenth century, in a paragraph called "Criticism," the Britannica says further: "Birrell, Walkley and Max Beerbohm have followed rather in the wake of the Stephens and Bagehot, who have criticized the sufficiency of the titles made out by the more enthusiastic and lyrical eulogists." Surely it was the fall of the dice that handed English literature in the nineteenth century over to a writer capable of such a remark. Pass, however, the stupidity in itself and consider only the space it occupies—four lines, by the most

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liberal estimate, given to Max Beerbohm, writer. Add the line and a half given to Max, caricaturist, and you reach a total of five and a half lines, if the index volume may be trusted. Somewhat grotesque, isn't it? For of Max Beerbohm's prose you may safely predict that it will have the kind of immortality which he has predicted for Whistler's. "When I dub Whistler an immortal writer," he says, "I do but mean that so long as there are a few people interested in the subtler ramifications of English prose as an art form, so long will there be a few constantly recurring readers of 'The Gentle Art.'"

No one except himself can write of Max Beerbohm in just the appropriate tone. I suppose a bland irritation often animates the amusement with which he reads what people say about him. Twice, so far as I remember, he has allowed this irritation to appear. Once when Mr. James Huneker called him a gentle mid-Victorian, or something of the sort; once when Mr. William Archer set forth his reasons for wishing a London morning daily would engage Max as dramatic critic. An innocent wish? That

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depends a little on the wisher, and Mr. Archer always goes armed with lethal weapons. It was Mr. Archer who advised Mr. Shaw to do fewer "You Never Can Tells," and more "Widowers' Houses." It was Mr. Archer who heard, through several acts of a play by Mr. Stephen Phillips, the younger Dumas speaking with the voice of Milton. But nothing said by Mr. Archer or Mr. Huneker, nothing I shall say to-day, can attain the perfection in inappropriateness of a speech made by Mr. James Pethel, when he and Mr. Beerbohm were on their way out of a café in Dieppe: "He asked me what I was writing now and said that he looked to me to 'do something big, one of these days,' and that he was sure I had it 'in' me. This remark (though of course I pretended to be pleased by it) irritated me very much." Was I not right in thinking that only Mr. Max Beerbohm could find the proper tone?

"James Pethel," with whose peculiar personality a few pages in the January *Century* make us well acquainted, is also the title of a peculiar story, characteristic of Max Beerbohm in being unlike his other stories, characteristic in its

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mockery of the feeling it communicates, or hardly communicates, since it betrays the reader into an excitement the author never knew. The most exciting page of all, a description of riskiest motoring from Dieppe to Rouen, is also the page where the art of caricature is carried furthest. But the story is characteristic of Max Beerbohm not only in the touches it adds to one's picture of his gifts. By a humor always present and sometimes manifest, by strokes of preparation neither too heavy nor too light, by an almost masculine intuition into the essential virtue of words, by a verbal dexterity born of this insight, by unlabored ease in elegance, by a precision as happy as carelessness could hope to be, "James Pethel" resembles everything else Mr. Max Beerbohm writes nowadays. Twenty years ago, when he was hardly more than half his present age, the ease did not always prevail against the elegance, and many a mannered sentence would have died of preciousness if he hadn't kept it alive by his mockery of its beauty. In Chicago, when he was twenty-three, he wrote of Walter Pater: "Not that even in those more decadent days of my childhood did I admire the man as a stylist. Even

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then I was angry that he should treat English as a dead language, bored by the sedulous ritual wherewith he laid out every sentence as in a shroud—hanging, like a widower, long over its marmoreal beauty or ever he could lay it at length in his book, its sepulchre." Even then, however, Max Beerbohm seldom wrote so. Even then, he could write like this, of Thackeray: "He blew on his pipe, and words came tripping round him like children, like pretty little children who are perfectly drilled for the dance, or came, did he will it, treading in their precedence, like kings, gloomily."

There, by the grace of God, spoke an originator of rhythms proper to English prose, a young light-handed master of its other harmony. The rhythm here is as original as this of Landor's, which of course you got by heart long since, leaning against your mother's knee, and which I never tire of tiring people by quoting: "There are no fields of amaranth on this side of the grave: there are no voices, O Rhodopè, that are not soon mute, however tuneful: there is no name, with whatever emphasis of passionate love repeated, of which the

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echo is not faint at last." But not in stateliest Landor, in Max alone among the masters of cadence, will you find beauty bestowed on absurdest incident. Who else would turn the emptying of a pitcher from an upper window upon a man waiting below, into this: "'Come a little nearer,' she whispered. The upturned and moonlit face obeyed her. She saw its lips forming the word 'Zuleika.' She took careful aim. Full on the face crashed the cascade of moonlit water, shooting out on all sides like the petals of some great silver anemone."

His ear is as sensitive to silver as his eye. You recall his noon in Oxford? "Some clock clove with silver the stillness of the morning. Ere came the second stroke, another and nearer clock was striking. And now there were others chiming in. The air was confused with the sweet babel of its many spires, some of them booming deep, measured sequences, some tinkling impatiently and outwitting others which had begun before them. And when this anthem of jealous antiphonies and uneven rhythms had dwindled quite away and fainted in one last solitary note of silver, there started

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somewhere another sequence; and this, almost at its last stroke, was interrupted by yet another, which went on to tell the hour of noon in its own way, quite slowly and significantly, as though none knew it." He has taught words to reveal a beauty in things comic, the humor in other things. He has seen his world with decorative humor and decorative insight. He has made his world clearer by arranging it in his own pattern. With his own taste as his court of last resort, among so many contemporaries trying to be themselves, he has tranquilly said what he felt, serenely himself without trying.

JANUARY, 1915.

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LATER GEORGE MOORE

AN elderly egotist has written three volumes of malicious reminiscences. That is a true statement about George Moore's "Hail and Farewell." It is also an absurdly misleading statement.

The reminiscences are not like ordinary reminiscences. Wishing to make portraits of his friends, George Moore sits down and consults his memory. When memory yields just the characteristic saying or doing that he needs in his picture he seeks no further. When memory is stingy he invents. With nicest craftsmanship he keeps the remembered things and the invented things in the same key. His sitters may declare that they never said this or never did that, and they may be right. It does not matter. Nobody who is not acquainted with them, at first or second hand, can tell the invented bits from the remembered. Both kinds help to make the pictures superb examples of Kleinmeisterei.

The malice is not like ordinary malice. It is

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George Moore's indispensable color. Without it he simply cannot paint. Whether his malice is claro or colorado or maduro, it never exists for its own sake. There is claro malice in the portrait of Edward Martyn, but there is also tenderness and love. Moore has dutchpainted Martyn in the round, colored and solid, short legs in queer trousers, the room over the tobacconist's, the passion for Palestrina, the queer candles Martyn reads Ibsen by, all the friendly kinks and creases of his mind. There is colorado malice in the portrait of Yeats—his height and his hands, the adjusted drapery of his intellect, his figured speech and wise—but there is also a very real admiration. There is maduro malice in the portraits of Plunkett and Gill, but there is also lighthearted fun.

The egotism is not like ordinary egotism. George Moore shows us George Moore interrupting AE, George Moore interrupting Yeats, George Moore interrupting Colonel Maurice Moore, George Moore interrupting John Eglinton. He knows that such an inveterate interrupter must bore his friends. Down goes the evidence against himself just the same. He shows us the friendship between Lady Gregory

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and Yeats as admirably sound on the whole, shows it slightly comic in parts, shows it making George Moore jealous and petulant. He puts in the jealousy and the petulance because they give definition to Lady Gregory's liking for Yeats, and because he needs them in his malicious portrait of George Moore.

This is a very special brand of egotism. Hardly a word in praise of George Moore is set down. Many rufflings of his vanity are recorded. It is not a devouring egotism. It doesn't always come to the table three regular times a day, but it does a good deal of nibbling between meals. George Moore's interest in himself doesn't shrink his power to observe other men. He observes while he is in the act of interrupting. This egotist, who is all the time looking at himself in the glass, sees other people a good half of the time.

George Moore has made a lifelong attempt to know himself, and he has almost succeeded. Almost everything concerning himself, from his love of Manet to the queer figure George Moore cuts in his pajamas, he records and understands. But one part of himself he misunderstands totally. He has no idea how fool-

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ish it was of him to enter himself for the standing and running broad generalization prize. The passages of sustained ratiocination are the only grotesques in the three volumes of "Hail and Farewell." He is rich in the small change of thought: he should never try to think consecutively. His self-knowledge has one other odd defect. He thinks it was his sympathy with the Boers in the South African war that drove him out of England and instigated the breakage of several old friendships. His mood at this time, in his own opinion, was harsh and bitter and savage and unrelenting and ferocious. He was stirred to the depths. All self-delusion, you understand. George Moore was fussed. That was all.

One other self-delusion is worth noting. It is hard to define, but its effect is plain. It has led George Moore to insert a few coarse and a few over-intimate passages in "Hail and Farewell." Their presence raises no moral question. It raises no aesthetic question. They are neither more nor less than bad smells.

Their sole function is to put an edge on our wonder that the man who wrote them wrote also such sentences as these: "Not a wind

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stirred in the tall grass, nor was there a cloud in the sky; a dim gold fading into gray and into blue, darkening overhead. A ghostly moon floated in the south, and the blue sailless sea was wound about the shoulders of the hills like a scarf." Or this: "We returned through the hilly country, with the wide, sloping evening above us, and apple-trees lining the road, all the apples now reddened and ready for gathering." Or this: "I had expected him to answer 'Cologne,' where we had stopped before to hear a contrapuntal Mass; two choirs, as well as I remember, answering each other from different sides of the cathedral, the voices dividing and uniting, seeking each other along and across the aisles." The first quotation is a little trite at the start, but doesn't it end in loveliness? And doesn't the creator of the last two know something about the rhythms of English prose?

An equal beauty is suffused over the longer landscape passages. George Moore is a true landscape painter. His recollections of Irish country are little gentle marvels of composition. They seem, as he might say if the pictures were by another hand, to have been breathed upon the page. Add to these and to the portraits

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of persons, when you are counting his good points, the narrative art which makes many greater men's narrative sound harsh and jerky by comparison; add the consummate skill of his spacing, a skill which ordains that the landscapes shall never be too few or too frequent for the portraits and the dialogue.

A reader who isn't curious about technical questions, about prose as an art, about narrative as an art, will never get out of George Moore the best that is there. But we may easily acquire the curiosity; it doesn't take much mind. All the rest of George Moore may be enjoyed without any mind at all. Reading him gives many readers impious little feelings of freedom. He has labored with zest to restrict the area of the unmentionable. He has added several to the list of mentionable things. He has helped enormously to break down the convention which says to an artist: "You are welcome to do your friends in bronze or marble or pastel or oil. You must let them alone if your medium happens to be words. You mustn't try to put their actions and talk into print."

"Hail and Farewell" is a by-product. Moore was lured back to Ireland by his yearning to be

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in the movement, to bear his part in the attempt to revive Irish letters and drama. The "movement" never took him to its bosom. It preferred, very wisely, Yeats and Lady Gregory and Synge; leaving George Moore free to write these volumes for his own pleasure and ours. He has done no better writing. Landscape and wistfulness and portraiture and even wit are harmonized here into the easiest narrative. Never has George Moore, Kleinmeister, appeared so easily master of his art.

NOVEMBER, 1914.

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HENRY JAMES'S QUALITY

ALTHOUGH it was Henry James's good fortune, until almost the end of his life, to keep coming nearer and nearer mastery of his special world as it grew richer and more intricate and harder to master, yet this world was ever the same place of tradition and appearances, of relations and perception.

We have found out something about a writer when we have noticed his attitude toward love or time. The lapse of time was told to Rossetti by the sea's sound, which men have always heard and always will hear. Nothing so unchangeable spoke of time to Henry James. He did not feel it as either an island in eternity or as a path into the future. Time interests him because it has given their tone to pleasant houses set in English country and English leisure, or looking down at Italian cities, because it enables man to make a long stay in one spot, because it obliterates rawness and newness. For him it is the maker of tradition, without

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which he does not conceive life as possible in the high manner and on the great scale.

With tradition he knew from the first how to deal so well that even for him the chances were slight of his learning to deal with it better. One might say almost as much about his way of dealing with appearances. From the Florentine or Roman landscape in "The Portrait of a Lady" (1881) to the Venetian landscape in "The Wings of the Dove" (1902) the progress is less obvious than from the earlier to the later picture of personal relations. The later landscapes are more brilliant, more achieved, more done, but their superiority shows even more sharply in the use Henry James puts them to, as matching or illustrating something in human character or predicament or mood. His later fullness of power over the external world is revealed with splendor in those large metaphors which rise above the horizon and flush the consciousness of his men and women with unforgettable color. The Princess, in "The Golden Bowl," is looking in through the window at the table where her father is sitting, and her husband, and the woman who is her father's wife and her husband's mistress. She wonders why

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"she had been able to give herself so little, from the first, to the vulgar heat of her wrong. She might fairly, as she watched them, have missed it as a lost thing; have yearned for it, for the straight vindictive view, the rights of resentment, the rages of jealousy, the protests of passion, as for something she had been cheated of not least: a range of feelings which for many women would have meant so much, but which for *her* husband's wife, for *her* father's daughter, figured nothing nearer to experience than a wild eastern caravan, looming into view with crude colors in the sun, fierce pipes in the air, high spears against the sky, all a thrill, a natural joy to mingle with, but turning off short before it reached her and plunging into other defiles."

As a man whose use of words has always told his curiosity about them, and whose patience gains a knowledge of their original meaning, comes little by little to use them so as to bring out their shyer and less audible tones, so Henry James's insight into human relations grew more penetrating, and his invention of ways to render what he saw grew almost as much.

Readers who agree in rating his latest novels

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higher than his earlier would also, I suppose, agree in saying that nowhere has he created more complicated and exquisite relations, nowhere has he explored them more exhaustively, than in "The Awkward Age," "The Wings of the Dove," "The Ambassadors" and "The Golden Bowl." In each of these books his main concern is with "the great constringent human relation between man and woman at once at its maximum and as the relation most worth while in life for either party." The quotation is from a lecture he gave in 1912, when he said also that in "The Ring and the Book" Browning offered us this relation "always and ever as the thing absolutely most worth while." Ten years earlier, in an essay on d'Annunzio, he had said of sexual passion: "From the moment it depends on itself alone for its beauty it endangers extremely its distinction, so precarious at the best. . . . What the participants do with their agitation, in short, or even what it does with them, *that* is the stuff of poetry, and it is never really interesting save when something finely contributive in themselves makes it so."

For Henry James nothing so endangered this passion's distinction as facility, as the loose easy

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dirigibility of its turnings from mistress to mistress, from lover to lover. Its justification, its beauty and dignity, must be missing unless the fire were lighted before one altar only, unless it burned there with an intensity that gave promise of its being perpetual. So deep a distrust of facility is also a positive need, felt by him on behalf of his men and women in love, of obstacles and difficulties across the way to complete possession. He has not painted for us the passion which is free to begin and to continue in the open, which travels the beaten road of marriage under the indifferent approving eyes of all the world. He seems to regard the maximum of intensity as impossible where there is neither danger nor any reason for secrecy.

According to the more usual opinion a passion that has its reasons for secrecy can almost never escape baseness. In Henry James we are often invited to feel that the necessary sacrifices, of scruple, of good faith, of elementary straightness and rightness of relation precisely where the lovers are most bound to go straight, serve to measure the passion's intensity and to justify the lovers in giving right of way to their central loyalty. Any one's moral code, no matter what

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else it consists of, is sure to contain an article forbidding us to treat a human being as a convenience, and another forbidding us to pretend while doing this that we are doing something else. Both articles are violated in the four novels I have named, but to call the result merely base and cruel would be absurd. The price paid is high: it is not exorbitant. In the moral world which Henry James cares for, the lovers somehow save their dignity by being imaginative and considerate, by being above all what he most wanted to have them, "distinguished" through their prodigious ability to perceive. Deeds are to be estimated, he would have us understand, largely by the kind of existence they have in the doer's consciousness. A doing wrong which is accompanied and conditioned by the most sensitive perception of other people's spiritual needs may easily be a richer moral good than a strict straight road of obvious duty, followed by plodders who are insensitive, unperceiving, blinded and benumbed by the mere weary miles of their march.

Nearly everything ministers to the distinction of Henry James's men and women, their surfaces, their bodily felicity, their capacity for

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being refined by joy and by torment, yet one thing, throughout each of his four supreme novels, wages against this distinction a most curious war. I refer to that remorseless inquisitiveness which satisfies itself, for our enlightenment no less than for the inquisitor's own, but terribly more to our perplexity than to theirs, by questions of which the explicit insistence is hard to reconcile with any remotest regard for the questioners' own notions of distinction. And remarkable indeed, as a measure of the extent to which Henry James can make us care for the things he specially cares for, is the fact that we resent less the almost universal failure of everybody to act upon wishes not understood and appraised with unreal clearness by the wishers, than we resent that persistent questioning so oddly offered to us by their creator as no violation of their own high code.

Each of his later novels is peopled by protagonists who watch themselves and one another, and by minor characters who watch the protagonists sleeplessly. They are not more interested than I, these minor characters, in the great relation we are studying together with such minuteness, yet their preoccupation makes

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me as uneasy as I might be on finding, while reading a breathless detective story, that the author had introduced several persons whose chief function was to sit up half the night in order to finish it.

The presence of these vigilant questioning satellites, in three of Henry James's greatest novels, has the additional disadvantage of leaving the protagonists without enough of such companionship as they would naturally desire and have. Except for "the great constringent relation" which absorbs them, and for the other relations which most sharply conflict with it, Merton Densher and the Prince, Maggie and Charlotte Sant and Kate Croy, strike one as leading lives that are strangely lacking in adequate friendships. Only in "The Awkward Age," in the society where we meet Nanda and Mrs. Brook, Mitchy and Vanderbank, do the companionable elements seem as richly supplied as the others. Nothing in "The Awkward Age" is finer than the relation, in "The Wings of the Dove," of Kate Croy and Milly and Densher, or than the relation of Maggie to her father in "The Golden Bowl." But the world of "The Awkward Age" has more dimensions,

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it is more populous, more of the inhabitants are worthy to breathe its air. One likes to remember that Henry James came in the end to understand the position of this masterpiece. Only two years ago he wrote, in "The New Novel": "It is no less apparent that the novel may be fundamentally *organized*—such things as 'The Egoist' and 'The Awkward Age' are there to prove it." I am glad that he had this feeling about what he had done, and that he did not leave us ignorant of a self-estimate in which he must have found consolation and reward.

MARCH, 1916.

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"THE MIDDLE YEARS"

SINCE the "Turn of the Screw," which fastened me in the habit of reading as it came out every new book by Henry James, I have had several moments of reaction against his way of looking at life and his way of writing English. "In the Cage" gave me one of these moments. Reading it was like watching Henry James watching through a knot-hole somebody who was watching somebody else through a knot-hole. "The Sacred Fount," to take another example, was a book to shake the faith of the faithful. For weeks after reading it I hoped and prayed I might never again be exposed to novels of country house adultery. Another moment of rebellion is the present, when I have been reading "The Middle Years," not the story but the fragment of autobiography named after the story. I am glad it has been published, there are things in it one would on no account have missed, portraits in different scales of Swinburne, Renan, Browning,

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Lewes, George Eliot, Tennyson, Mrs. Greville, Lady Waterford. But it makes me feel that Henry James took with him to England, as a young man of twenty-five, a state of mind which would have been forgivable if it had been temporary, and which lasted forever after. On a March day in 1870 he arrived at Liverpool in a condition of anxious receptivity, and so he continued until the end. Like Coventry Patmore's lover, who kept on suing and wooing long after "all is won that hope can ask," Henry James kept up his nervous courtship of England. For years he and England lived together on what, had the anxious husband been able to remember that he was no longer bridegroom or fiancé on probation, might have been terms of placid connubial friendship, but he never got used to her. Something about her, something storied or even something finished and fashionable, some attitude which marked her as belonging to a greater world than his, provoked him ever to pursue. England lived at her ease with Henry James: he lived with her in a sacred twitter.

"This doom of inordinate exposure to appearances, aspects, images, every protrusive

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item almost in the great beheld sum of things, I regard in other words as having settled upon me once for all while I observed for instance that in England the plate of buttered muffin and its cover were sacredly set upon the slop-bowl after hot water had been ingenuously poured into the same, and had seen that circumstance in a perfect cloud of accompaniments." Trop de beau style, says a French critic, after reading one of Zola's heavy-laden descriptions of a table set for luncheon, trop de beau style pour des prunes. So in this case. Too fine and laborious a receptivity, too rich a cloud of accompaniments, for a plate of buttered muffin. From the perusal of such a passage I rise and shout something about "the need of a world of men for me." When I find Henry James remembering the exact number of times he had been asked out to breakfast in the United States of America, up to March, 1870, I exclaim: "Teach him rather to forget." To Henry James, my irritation tells me, life was too much "the great adventure of sensibility," and too little anything else. In London "the commonest street-vista was a fairly heart-shaking contributive image." In London, after one of

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his adventures in sensibility, he "cherished for the rest of the day the peculiar quality of my vibration." Now, though I yield to none, and so forth, there are moments, and this is one of them, when passages like these make me long to pack my grip and go to some place where men do not cherish or discriminate their vibrations, where men do things and think only for the sake of doing them, where they butt one another off the sidewalk without apology, where they eat pie and steak for breakfast. Take me out of this world of sensibility, I cry, take me into the world where men hustle and loaf and spit on the floor.

And the way of writing? Don't let us hunt out something special, let us take what we happen to find, not forgetting of course that Henry James did not revise his first dictated draft of "The Middle Years": "What was the secret of the force of that suggestion?—which was not, I may say, to be invalidated, to my eyes, by the further observation of cases and conditions. Was it that the enormous 'pull' enjoyed at every point of the general surface the stoutness of the underlying belief in what was behind all

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surfaces?" Compare these, which for their dictating author are rather plain, with two sentences, written about the time of which Henry James is speaking, by another observer of English life: "Your middle class man thinks it the highest pitch of development and civilization when his letters are carried twelve times a day from Islington to Camberwell, and from Camberwell to Islington, and if railway trains run to and fro between them every quarter of an hour. He thinks it is nothing that the trains only carry him from an illiberal, dismal life at Islington to an illiberal, dismal life at Camberwell; and the letters only tell him that such is the life there." Or go back from Matthew Arnold's prose, back a hundred years to the prose of Fielding. Leaving all other biographers who have told the lives of great and worthy persons, Fielding turns to "Colley Cibber's Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber" and to "Pamela": "But I pass by these and many others to mention two books lately published, which represent an admirable pattern of the amiable in either sex. The former of these, which deals in male virtue, was written by the great person himself, who lived the life he hath

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recorded, and is by many thought to have lived such a life only in order to write it."

It is in the eighteenth century, most of all, that the style of "The Middle Years" makes one want to stay. I believe I'll stay there for a while, reading Swift and Goldsmith and Defoe, until I have had time to relapse into homesickness for the modern, until I miss the "inspiration caught from subtler hues."

DECEMBER, 1917.

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RICHARD THE LION-HARDING

FROM the outset of his career, when he was writing stories curiously accomplished for so young a man, it has been Mr. Richard Harding Davis's misfortune to excite in many of his many readers a slight prejudice against him. The years have not weakened this prejudice, although they should have. When a writer is fifty, or thereabouts, and has published many self-revealing volumes, you may or may not like him, but prejudice ought long ago to have disappeared.

In Mr. Davis's case the operation of prejudice is easily described. Toward the end of one of his books you come across a passage which may be taken, let us suppose, in either of two senses. You promptly take it in the sense less favorable to Mr. Davis. Prejudice inclines you to this less favorable interpretation, and it is the author himself, in earlier passages, who has unwittingly prepared you to understand the later passage as he never meant it to be understood.

It is easy to find examples of this in "With

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the Allies." Mr. Davis is praising the work done by certain Americans in Paris: "At the residence of Mr. Herrick, in the rue François Premier, there was an impromptu staff composed chiefly of young American bankers, lawyers and business men. They were men who inherited, or who earned, incomes of from twenty thousand to fifty thousand a year, and all day and every day, without pay, and certainly without thanks, they assisted their bewildered, penniless and homesick fellow countrymen." Mr. Davis does not intend to imply that the nobleness of such conduct varies with the size of the income. He does not intend to imply that the nobleness is the same whether the income be dependent upon the young banker's exertions or inherited and continuous. Yet an unsympathetic reader is, by the time he reaches this passage, prepared to seek and find both implications.

Mr. Davis is a genuine admirer of courage, chivalry toward women and undemonstrativeness. He has an unaffected natural talent for praising them in words which inspire one with a passing distaste for these good things. Have you never, although you may be rather chivalrous yourself, in a modest way, risen from the

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perusal of Mr. Davis on chivalry with a determination never again, no matter how infirm the woman standing in front of you might be, or how heavy-laden, to rise from your seat in the car for her sake? And instead of thanking him for releasing you from the bondage of chivalry, haven't you sometimes been rather annoyed with him for cheapening chivalry by his praise?

Fortunately for chivalry, there is next to nothing about it in "With the Allies." There is, however, and unavoidably, much about courage. Mr. Davis describes with vividness the undemonstrative curt courage of British officers, and somehow you get a picture not only of this courage, but also of Mr. Davis himself, sitting opposite each curtly courageous British officer, filling himself with an admiration which will overflow by and by, in romantic eulogy of courage so undemonstrative.

Of Mr. Davis's own courage, which is the real thing, which has been proved over and over again all over the world, there is in "With the Allies," as in all his other books, neither romantic eulogy, nor any eulogy whatever. Something deeper than prejudice against Mr. Davis, some meanness in one's own grain, is the only

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valid explanation of sneers at him for letting us know, indirectly, that he is a brave man. In no way can a war correspondent whose heart is in his work avoid imparting this kind of information.

There is nevertheless, in Mr. Davis's attitude toward his own courage, something subtly self-contradictory. One gets, along with a conviction that he is brave, and a conviction that he sincerely wishes never to boast of this fact, a hint here and there of a hardly conscious wish to let us know that if the hour struck for him he too would die like an English gentleman, without pose, laconically, sans phrase, as part of the day's work, as a matter of course. One suspects him, in his own case, of wanting us to value at its true worth a courage which he is too good an English gentleman to value so highly. He really possesses many of the fine qualities he praises in other men, and he seems dimly uneasy under the yoke of a code which does not permit him to praise these qualities wherever they are found.

As for this code, so special and so highly esteemed, one infers that it does not preclude an occasional reference to the war correspond-

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ent's own predicament: "Maxim's, which now reminds one only of the last act of 'The Merry Widow,' was the meeting-place for the French and English officers from the front; the American military attachés from our embassy, among whom were soldiers, sailors, aviators, marines; the doctors and volunteer nurses from the American ambulance, and the correspondents who by night dined in Paris and by day dodged arrest and other things on the firing-line, or as near it as they could motor without going to jail."

Maxim's, and the life there in war time, make Mr. Davis almost reflective. "When the English officers are granted leave of absence," he writes, "they . . . motor into Paris for a bath and lunch. At eight they leave the trenches along the Aisne and by noon arrive at Maxim's, Voisin's or Larue's. Seldom does war present a sharper contrast. From a breakfast of 'bully' beef, eaten from a tin plate, within their nostrils the smell of campfires, dead horses and unwashed bodies, they find themselves seated on red velvet cushions, surrounded by mirrors and walls of white and gold, and spread before them the most immaculate silver, linen and glass.

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And the odors that assail them are those of truffles, white wine and *'artichaut sauce mousseline.'"*. Mr. Davis finds the contrast not only sharp. He finds it more significant, subtly sweeter and dearer, than some of us can find it, no matter how hard we try. In his eyes, one imagines, it's a contrast of which the British privates could give only an inferior imitation if they should leave the trenches at eight, travel third class to Paris, lunch amid the complicated odors of an *établissement Duval,* or drink, at one of the *prix fixe* places, *vin compris.*

Cleanly bred English gentlemen, well educated, finely trained, who know how to risk their lives quietly, without phrases or fuss, and how to order a meal—we read a good deal about them in "With the Allies," and as we read we trace our slight prejudice against Mr. Davis to its source, to our suspicion that in his eyes physical courage is not very much more important than good form in courage, that he overrates the code which defines correctness on the battlefield for the members of a laconic polo-playing class.

A perfect day, for Mr. Davis, would consist of a morning's danger, taken as a matter of

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course; in the afternoon a little chivalry, equally a matter-of-course to a well-bred man; then a motor dash from hardship to some great city, a bath, a perfect dinner nobly planned. Shrapnel, chivalry, *sauce mousseline*, and so to work the next morning on an article which praised in others virtues his code compels him almost to ignore in himself. Richard Coeur-de-Lion would not have disliked such a day, once he was used to shrapnel.

JANUARY, 1915.

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VICTOR CHAPMAN'S LETTERS

PASCAL bids us imagine a number of men in chains, and all under sentence of death. Every day some of them are chosen, and their throats are cut in sight of the others. Those who are still alive see their own fate in that of their companions. They look one upon the other in pain and without hope, awaiting their turn. This, says Pascal, is a picture of man's predicament. The truth of this picture, from which we turn our eyes during most of the days of our life, is not so easily disregarded in the days of war. To the men at the front death may be near in time or far off. They cannot tell. But this they do know, that for each of them death is only a few inches distant.

Among all the realities of war this nearness of death is the easiest for stay-at-homes to imagine. Any one can imagine it, can imagine it almost vividly, who has known fear. There is a greater difference between our pictures of

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war's other realities and the things themselves —the monotony, the lack of privacy, the torn bodies, the scattered fragments of men, the rains, the mud, the noises of agony, the stench, the hopes defeated. Yet one may doubt whether our imaginings differ more widely from the realities than these realities differ to the attention and the perception of different men at the front. One soldier sees in war what a pacifist orator guesses at. Another, the author of those "Lettres d'un Soldat" which Miss Sergeant revealed to us, a few weeks ago, in the New Republic, trains his will and his attention until he can ignore many of the realities by which other soldiers are obsessed, until he can keep his mind, for hours together, upon beauty in the visible world, and upon doing his work.

Life at the front, to the author of those letters, was a triumph of the will, a daily and hourly effort not to hear and not to see, an equal effort to see and to do. Victor Chapman resembled this young French soldier in his love of landscape: both were brave men: the resemblance stops there. A sense of effort is the last thing you feel in reading Chapman's letters.

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He was happier at the front than he had ever been before the war, happier as a member of the Franco-American Aviation Corps than he had been in the Foreign Legion. "Victor never really felt that he was alive," Mr. John Jay Chapman says in the Memoir of his son, "except when he was in danger. Nothing else aroused his faculties. This was not conscious, but natal—a quality of the brain. As some people need oxygen, so Victor needed danger. . . . His pleasure was in scenery. If you could place him in a position of danger and let him watch scenery, he was in heaven. I do not think he was ever completely happy in his life till the day he got his flying papers."

Victor Chapman was killed at Verdun, on June 23, 1916, while flying over the German lines. Less than a week earlier he had been wounded, but had withstood all attempts to send him to Paris for a rest, or to a hospital. His captain, by promising him a new and better machine, persuaded him to take things easily for a few days, on each of which Chapman would fly over to a hospital, carrying oranges to a friend who lay wounded there. On the after-

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noon of the 23d he followed three of his companions, Captain Thenault, Prince and Lufbery, to the lines, meaning to stay only a little while and then go on to the hospital. Finding his friends outnumbered he dived among the German machines, and soon afterward his own, a Nieuport, was seen to fall. He was twenty-six years old, had been a pilot since February of the same year, and had spent a year in the trenches. "For over one hundred consecutive days," Mr. Chapman writes, "Victor was in the front trenches as aide-chargeur to a mitrail. He was slightly wounded once, and one-half of his squadron was either killed or seriously hurt." Although he knew what risks he ran, and had said, three days before his death, "Of course I shall never come out of this alive," his letters leave upon one the impression of a man who not only took danger as a matter of course, but who thought of it only when assuring his parents that there was none. "One is as safe," he writes to his father from the trenches, "as in any other walk of life. These whistling balls can be compared to microbes in the air. There are thousands, but if the proper precautions are taken one is no more imperiled than from small-

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pox or pneumonia. The danger was when we first arrived. No one knew the lay of the land, where it was suicidal and where not. But now every one knows the ropes." Chapman was reluctant to admit that danger was danger until it was past.

His letters express his passion for landscape, for the French countryside he could look down on, for the clouds near which he was so much at home. He had his joy in the air and in fighting. Privation did not exist to his attention. Danger was the element he breathed most easily. It is impossible not to feel, as one reads the Letters and the Memoir, that Victor Chapman was a prisoner on this earth at peace; that he escaped, exulting and grave, into war and the sky. Friends must have realized who knew him as a boy, solitary and daring and generous, with his deep melancholy and his capacity for never forgetting his dead, that whatever his fate might be it could not be commonplace. He and his mother come to life again, and will live with a tragic intensity forever, in this Memoir, where Mr. Chapman speaks of them with a passion of candor that is lonelier than any reticence.

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War is not romance for most soldiers, nor fighting the satisfaction of an ideal passion. Some moment when we realize this to the exclusion of other realities, when we have forgotten the exception in the rule, when we come near denying that characters so unusual as Victor Chapman's exist in contemporary flesh and blood, that will be one of the moments to take up and re-read this book, to be reminded that antique fortitude and antique contempt of death are still alive. Mr. John Jay Chapman, while in the act of putting in those life-touches which make his portrait of his son so vivid and so individual, would have us remember that Victor Chapman was only one brave man among many brave. "I have never regretted it for him," says a letter from Kiffin Rockwell, who was killed a little later, "as I know he was willing and satisfied to give his life that way if it was necessary, and that he had no fear of death, and there is nothing to fear in death." So these sailors of the air can speak, and so they feel. For them, as for those older sailors who took the Latin words for their motto, navigare necesse est, vivere non necèsse. "Il ne faut pas que l'univers s'arme pour l'écraser," Pascal says

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of man, in one of his most famous passages. "Une vapeur, une goutte d'eau suffit pour le tuer. Mais quand l'univers l'écraserait, l'homme serait encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt; et l'avantage que l'univers a sur lui, l'univers n'en sait rien."

AUGUST, 1917.

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"THE SPIRIT OF MAN"

ALTHOUGH we may nowadays treat the Golden Treasury too much like a common anthology, as if it were only a convenient place for meeting old friends, yet at one time or another we have all admired, some of us without help and some not until Matthew Arnold had shown us how to admire, the beautiful putting together of its pieces, the way in which many of them gain, from their setting among the right neighbors, something of color or meaning or sound.

Those who perceive for themselves, or those who can perceive with assistance—which class do we belong to? "The Spirit of Man" will not help us to an answer, for in this new anthology, made by the poet laureate, Robert Bridges, and published a year ago, the arrangement is so winning that he must be a dull reader who can withstand its action. Perfection of arrangement was no doubt easier for Mr. Bridges to approach than for Palgrave. "The Spirit of Man" is not a collection "of the best

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songs and lyrical poems in the English language." Its aim is to illustrate and support the belief "that spirituality is the basis and foundation of human life." Prose and verse in English and French are admitted, and so are translations from the Russian, from Greek and Latin, and things brought from the East. A purpose so much more special than Palgrave's gave Mr. Bridges material more homogeneous, less refractory, not so hard to put in order.

The success of his chosen order is obvious if we will read his book as he would have us read it, beginning at the beginning and going straight ahead. He leads us in all ease from mood to mood, takes us with him all the way, leaves us rested and bettered by the journey. His taste and art allow us to feel, for a short time and in the case of some of us perhaps for the last time, the beauty of those spiritual moods to which nowadays we do not rise by accident, nor yet by will, nor at all without the help of strong hands. I know that while I was reading his book the other day I had an illusion that I was growing physically lighter, that not only did my eyes look up through the clouds to serener spaces, but that I was carried gently upward to them, and

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breathed for a while those brighter, purer and austerer airs where Mr. Bridges lives and is at home, nor ever suffers from mountain sickness. Great must be the persuasiveness of an anthology which can lift a heavy body to uncongenial spiritual heights.

Coming down to earth again, later, I asked how it was that I, whose soul is no frequenter of the uplands, visiting them but seldom and never staying long, had been so submissive to Mr. Bridges. Why had I not been on guard against being exalted? Why had I not resisted this unfamiliar refining process? And the answer, when it came, came as a surprise. Mr. Bridges has printed the names of his authors at the end of his book. "It is true," he writes, "that very often we cannot fully understand a passage unless we know who wrote it; on the other hand it is an idle and pernicious habit to ask for information on any question before bringing one's own judgment to bear upon it; and this book may even have a secondary usefulness in providing material for the exercise of literary judgment, in those who have any taste for the practice." This exercise in literary judgment, made possible because Mr. Bridges has

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printed nearly all his pieces without names, kept me from suspecting that I was growing too spiritual to be true. Vanity's strongest instinct is the instinct of self-preservation, but vanity also likes to run risks. Sometimes I tried to guess who wrote what I was reading, sometimes I tried only to guess the writer's epoch. My mistakes were many, as when I failed to give Thomas à Kempis his own, and could not put Marcus Aurelius near his right century. Most of all was I vexed when I ascribed to Pascal, of whom I judge as the good judges do, a piece written by Amiel, whom I like but feebly, believing the good judges rate him too high. And in general I found, whenever I was certain of an author's name, that it was memory which made me certain, and not insight.

Perhaps the spirituality in this book would seem too spiritual if one's attention were not taken off it by the exercise in literary judgment. At times the wish to attribute rightly is on top, and at times this disappears and one attends only to the wisdom or beauty or high mind of the written things. Thus a reader's attention, turning from this hand to that hand, keeps its strength without faltering, has even strength to

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spare for a hundred and one details, for the skill with which the high color of Bacon or of Burke is placed so as not to seem out of harmony with its quieter surroundings, for the contrast, in Mr. Bridges's own subtly-rhythmed quantitative hexameters, between the pattern made by the quantities and the pattern made by the stressed syllables. Now the patterns coincide, now they have separated and each is trying to get possession of the listener's ear. Now we move with the stressed syllables against the stream of the quantities, now the stressed syllables and the long syllables are the same for a few feet, and what we hear is less complex and moves faster. Newer and more varied rhythms are given to the ear in the experiments Mr. Bridges has made in quantitative verse than in all the free verse I have read.

Besides his hexameters from Virgil and Homer, Mr. Bridges has put into this book "a few half-original verse-translations," and a few of his improvements upon other translators' work. A study of these reworkings of older versions will delight anybody who likes to perceive, in these small and transforming touches, how small a change may make how great a dif-

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ference. But on the whole Mr. Bridges has feared too much "a perpetual temptation to quote from himself." I wish he had felt this temptation oftener. Here we have only one poem by Robert Bridges. I wish he had put in the last one in Book V of his "Shorter Poems," for I know of no poem, anywhere, that better expresses the final mood in which his anthology would leave us:

Weep not to-day: why should this sadness be?
Learn in present fears
To o'ermaster those tears
That unhindered conquer thee.

Think on thy past valour, thy future praise;
Up, sad heart, nor faint
In ungracious complaint,
Or a prayer for better days.

Daily thy life shortens, the grave's dark peace
Draweth surely nigh,
When good-night is good-bye;
For the sleeping shall not cease.

Fight, to be found fighting: nor far away
Deem, nor strange thy doom.
Like this sorrow 'twill come,
And the day will be to-day.

JANUARY, 1917.

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MY NEW ULSTER

ALTHOUGH my ulster was what we used to call worn out, being a little ragged in spots and more than a little threadbare, and although it was almost ten years old, I did not easily bring myself to buy a new one. I was held back by pictures of the other things that could be bought for the same money, and of the men who needed these things. Nor was I quite uninfluenced by that decent respect for the opinions of mankind which some of us call fear. Several ready-made shops did I visit, trying on before mirrors of heroic size, conscientiously feeling different cloths, behaving in general like a man who thinks to hide his ignorance of wine by holding his glass of sherry against the light, testingly. Having thus persuaded myself, much of course against my will, that the better article is always cheaper than the cheaper, I went to my tailor's with a conscience nearly in the place where I had been trying to put it.

Nearly, but not quite. The new ulster has a more "conspicuous plainness" than most of the

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clothes I buy when nobody gives me sobering advice. It looks a little, now when I survey it with an unimpassioned eye, like a garment chosen by one who wished to escape notice. Now and then, wearing it carelessly before friends whom I judge to be good judges of such things, I have caught myself wondering whether the degree to which it has failed to attract their attention were not excessive. One of them, I am bound to say, did give that ulster the praise it deserves. Then he paused for a minute, appeared to calculate, and added: "It ought to last you half the rest of your life."

True, perhaps, but what is the use of reminding a man that he is mortal by such concrete illustrations? Their convincingness is their offense. If a friend must tell me that I am to die, if he cannot be happy until he has got this truth off his chest, let him say it in a jargon of abstract words, like senescence. Why poison my mind against a worthy ulster, which for days I shall not put on without reflecting that if you measure its length of life by that of its predecessors, and my length of life by that of mine, the next ulster I buy will probably be my last? In Paris once,

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years ago now, I came suddenly on a shop which sold dix mille chemises. The thought that I could not live to wear so many made mortality seem real.

What would my conduct be, I wonder, if in truth, and say for a week on end, I did imagine myself part of this earth's perishable freight? Set my house in order? Try to remember where I put my will? Number my days so that I might apply my heart unto wisdom? Of course, of course. But what else? "What," said Samuel Johnson, upon one of the many occasions when he thought of death, "what must be the condition of him whose heart will not suffer him to rank himself among the best, or among the good? Such must be his dread of the approaching trial, as will leave him little attention to the opinion of those whom he is leaving forever." I do not believe I should partake of this feeling. The opinion of those whom I was leaving forever would matter a good deal. In one's last week on earth it would be pleasant to do something, not melodramatic or obviously staged, which would round off one's life with a quietly noble gesture, stop on the right note,

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look handsome in retrospect, be not misplaced on the front page. In practice, such gestures being difficult, I should doubtless content myself with removing one or two objects from my effects. This book, for example, in which I have written so many words, this must not fall under the eyes of my heirs. They would not read it, that is more than probable, but certainly they will not if I commit it, thus, to the flames. . . . There! . . . That is done. . . . It burns . . . it is gone.

It was far from a "roguish" book, of the kind which Mr. Samuel Pepys burned now and then, lest it be found in his library to shame him. It was only a blank book in which I had built, line upon line, page upon page, a monument to my unwisdom. There I had set down, beginning with August, 1914, what I believed about the war. I believed that the Germans would be brought to a standstill somewhere in Belgium, that by their continued attacks in mass formation they proved how little they had learned since 1871 about the art of war, that the German navy would be destroyed before August, 1915, that the strength of the Russian army would

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bear against Germany with ever increasing weight, that the entrance of Rumania into the war would shorten it, that England had got the submarines under control. These and other opinions did I write down, and nearly every one of them wrong.

The men who are running the war, who have to judge probability and to make decisions, these need all possible confidence in themselves. But I wish that everybody who does nothing for the war or to the war except to talk about it, and whose self-confidence needs impairment, had kept a book like mine and were forced to re-read it at short intervals. Alike from one's obvious mistakes and from one's monotonous consistency something might be learned, some self-distrust acquired. Early in the war my cousin Isabel became convinced that the Germans had committed atrocities. The war has convinced her of nothing else. She has been consistent, stationary, unexperiencing.

Which minds have learned least in the last four years from the war, those which still feed on atrocities and give eager credence to every spy story, or those whose attitude was fixed

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once for all by their reaction against the romantic illusion about war? For them the details of a soldier's life have an unchanging fascination. Their attention is fixed upon the cold, the ruin, the mud, the vermin, the stenches. They see war as a field of putrid flesh, hear it as shrieks of agony, feel it as the human body into which a bayonet crashes or slips. They forget that the widespread, the almost universal courage which endures these things is greater than it would need to be if war were all glory and romance. The worse war is, the more horrible and futile, the more miraculous that greatness of spirit which has fought and fights on.

Meanwhile I notice, in my friends and in myself, a feeling which is of no value to anybody, and which does not change except to grow deeper and to displace other feelings. Here we all are, safe, middle-aged, warmed, fed, clothed, harmlessly occupied. And over there the better bodies and better brains of younger men are being destroyed scientifically, day by day, at a rate that can almost be predicted. This contrast is already old, but always new to feel, week by week more unbearable, unthink-

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able. Our feeling is more presentable than my cousin Isabel's monomania, but not more useful. In my case it produces only silly self-deceptions before spending money on myself. For I still believe I should not have bought that new overcoat if I hadn't lost the old one.

JANUARY, 1918.

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ACTS OF COMPOSITION

IN imagination I stand, some fine morning of next June, upon a platform slightly raised, where teachers are sitting, and even a few trustees. Ingratiatingly I look down upon a roomful of school-children who actually wish to listen. I see fifty or sixty expectant faces, washed and upturned, visibly waiting for the words that are to set them free. Not in vain are they eager. The words come. In accents of unfeigned sincerity I begin my lecture upon rhetoric, or the art, as in my own youth we were incited to call it, of efficient communication by language.

Let us start, I tell my little hearers, with paragraphs. Years ago a revered teacher taught me that the first sentence of a well-made paragraph should discover a subject and that the last sentence should drive a conclusion home. For months I struggled to satisfy this idea of paragraph structure, without ever getting even so far as to learn with what material one should fill the space between these limitary

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sentences, the announcer and the summer-up. Many paragraphs by many masters did I pull to pieces, finding about ten that did not conform to this ideal pattern for every one that did. So I banished the ideal, renounced the teacher, forgot his advice until only the other day, when I read in the editor's prefatory note to "The Middle Years" that Henry James usually put off the markings of his paragraphs until the final revision of a book. Why should he have done otherwise? The paragraph was invented for the convenience of readers, as an ex post facto sign that one of the writer's impulses had spent itself, or was about to change cars. To most men dreams do not come in paragraphs, nor day-dreamt hallucinations, nor confessions of faith, nor declarations of love. If you keep consciously aiming to write paragraphs you risk contracting the habit of trying to see the world in paragraphs, a sad preventive of the better habit of trying to see. Paragraph structure, so I end this part of my lecture, isn't anything to worry about.

Transition, or the art of getting from this paragraph to that, is another thing that the writer must put clean out of his head. If he

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does not, if he remains a slave of transition, he will pester his reader with obtruded connectives, with *at the same times,* with *on the other hands,* with *thens* flanked by commas and academically sticking out. At its worst transition is a long way round from something you have been saying—to something you mean to say—through something better left unsaid. Poem, essay, chapter, argument—too much attention to transition will make any one of these resemble John Florian's dinners, at which the last mouthful of every course except coffee tasted a little like the first mouthful of the next.

About clearness, force and ease I make only two remarks, both striking. I invite my audience to inquire whether "The Faery Queen" would have been better, in any sense that any sane person could give the word, if Spenser had tried for force; whether by trying for ease Browning would have bettered "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came;" whether "The Listeners" could have kept its charm if Mr. de la Mare had made it as clear as "What Does Little Birdie Say." No writer, I add, nobody whom anybody would think of calling a writer, ever bothers his head about ease or force when he is performing that

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one of the many acts of composition which consists in putting words together into a sentence. Clearness is in a different category. But not even clearness need be the conscious concern of any one while he is writing. A writer almost never tells himself he must be clear. What he says to himself is "That isn't what I mean"—"That's not what I'm after"—"I can't let it go like that." The impulse which he acts on when he rewrites an obscure sentence is very like the impulse which takes you out of your chair and across the room in order to straighten a picture that hangs crooked.

The act of composition, as some people still call it, is neither single nor distinct. It is all the acts of experiencing and remembering and inventing and translating into words. Learning to translate into words is the act of adding both unconsciously and also consciously to the number of things you can unconsciously do. It is like learning to play a game, except that no learner of any game has ever to be on his guard against excess of either conscious or unconscious imitation. But even in writing, if you have a voice of your own, your fear of imitating too closely is controlled by your certitude that you

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cannot imitate successfully, and that through imitation you become free. Qui apicem gessisti, mors perfecit tua ut essent omnia brevia, honos fama virtusque, gloria atque ingenium. Try to copy into English not the total effect of this inscription on a Roman tomb, but the effect of its m's and n's, the salience of its three ia's, its vowel sounds in their order, the funeral march of its clauses. By consciously trying to imitate you learn to do unconsciously, when the right matter and the right mood come together and join hands, something you would have written differently but for the imitative exercises you have forgotten.

Most of the too few painters I know talk easily enough, but when one of them is talking to another I notice how he often hesitates, not for a word but for a memory. His eye is waiting until it sees with the needed degree of distinctness the color or the form of the thing he is talking about. So a writer will often stop, hesitate, hang back until memory has brought his subject into the field of vision, where he will hold this subject until his remembering eye has seen what he was looking for, concretely, in its haecceity, and the words he was after come

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of themselves to his pen. They will not be the words that would have come if he had not made this effort to remember. To the good memory, the memory that can command things seen, heard, felt or understood, comes the phrase that nobody ever thought of before, in its fresh exactness.

Out of memory, by a hand whose sensitiveness experiment has refined, whose strength experiment has made stronger—such is the pedigree of much good writing. To say this, however, is to refer to those two only of the acts composing the act of composition in which self-improvement is a possible thing. A rich experience to remember, that power to remake remembered experience which we call invention, are at no one's command. They depend, I suppose, upon a writer's physiological equipment. But anybody may choose to write about what he remembers most sharply. Anybody may increase the faithfulness of his words to remembered things.

With these words of temperate hope I bring my lecture to a close. Its effect is not quite what I anticipated. No teacher threatens to assault me in reprisal for my derogatory re-

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marks about clearness, force and ease. The children do not crowd about the platform saying things which lead me to exclaim, with a well-rehearsed involuntary air, "I am glad you asked me that question." Well, it doesn't matter. Better luck next time. And, anyway, I have made my train without having had to tell anybody that I stole my Latin inscription from Mr. Mackail's wise and beautiful introduction to his "Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology."

MARCH, 1918.

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FORGET IT

TO make the last three months intelligible I must go back further than that. One little year ago I was almost happy. Nearly all the members of my family had become inured to my presence in the home. My friends never showed, and I believe seldom felt, discomfort when I accepted their invitations. Acquaintances would smile cheerily when we met on the street. Now and then one among them would stop of his own accord and pass the time of day. In my quiet way I was, in short, a popular man.

Not quite a year ago an acute observer might have detected, here a little and there a little more, signs of change. That acute observer was not I. The first step on the downhill road was taken when I bought a magazine, the second in several years, and read an advertisement. It told how Mr. Smith, whose memory had been so defective that he could not recall the names of his children by his first wife, or the address

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to which he was expected to send the alimony check, now could and did tell such of his seventeen thousand acquaintances as came his way their telephone numbers and middle names. I took the memory training lessons by which Mr. Smith had profited so strangely. Next I read an advertisement which narrated the methodical saturation of Mr. Jones in general information. A quarter of an hour a day was turning him into a well posted and therefore brilliant conversationalist. I took that course too. I made myself a lord of miscellaneous knowledge. No doubt you can guess the next and last step. You can see me, after but a few months devoted to training my will by mail, a changed man, an aggressive character, a dominating personality.

Now I am not yet prepared to admit that any one of these three disciplines, taken singly, would have wrecked my life. Perhaps even the three together would not have shattered my happiness if I had not been such a forward pupil, which is what each of my teachers assured me, by mail, that I was. Be these things as they may, the great fact remains: Last June, when I, the finished product of all this training, burst upon the world, confidently, optimistically,

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the world did as it always does when things burst. It ran for cover.

By the way, I ought at this point, in fairness to the advertisements which I accuse of my undoing, to say that they kept many of their promises. They turned me from nobody into somebody. My improved memory was of immense utility in my office, where works of reference fell into disuse as soon as my employer had tired of the pastime of consulting them to verify what I said. Of what service were they when it was so much quicker for anybody who wanted to know the duty on cocoa matting in the tariff of 1884, whether it was hemp or wool that ought to be wet-rotted, scutched and hackled, whether Kosciuszko shrieked as Freedom fell, or the other way round, to ask me? An ability to remember things like these has a cash value. Combined with my new dominatingly aggressive will it raised my salary to eighteen thousand a year.

That is the good side of my case, and would that my case had been one-sided! But it wasn't. Beyond the walls of my office, where I united the merits of a work of reference and of an irresistible force, there was a different story to

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tell. My acquaintances began to behave themselves oddly. They seemed always to be hurrying to important engagements. Friends, what you would really call friends, ceased to be. My wife took to accepting an improbable number of invitations in which I was not included, and I have reason to believe that when invitations were lacking she would sometimes dine alone at her modest club. My children escaped me by marrying, hastily, people they hardly knew.

From June until near the end of September my way of life led me from solitude to solitude, from hell to hell. In September, at the request of friends who used to be mine and had become my wife's, I first heard of Dr. Lugweed. His mere waiting-room made an immediate impression. Its literature was obviously modern. There was a profuse supply of pamphlets, by which I was astonished, puzzled and thrilled. Here indeed were the sources of hope—What to Forget and How; The Lost Is Found, or Inhibitions Regained; The Abortion of Anecdotes. I entered Dr. Lugweed's private office with a beating heart and shining eyes.

The doctor did not disappoint the expectations his ante-room had raised. Without a sign

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of patience he listened to my sad story. When at last I had finished he said: "Your case is not uncommon, although exceptionally grave. Its gravity, of which you do not appear to be fully aware, you have revealed by many signs, of which I select but one to notice. While sitting here, consulting a busy and by no means inexpensive physician, you have seen fit to tell him the population of Sandusky in 1910, the relation of James I of England to Henry VIII, and the mean height of the Vale of Kashmir above sea-level. Yes, your case is grave. But I do not despair of curing you if you will consent to become an inmate of my sanitarium for three months."

Into the details of those three months, which began with October, I shall not go. Suffice it to say that Dr. Lugweed, after testing and observing me for a week, took a more hopeful view of my case than I had given him at our first encounter. His method is to impair the memory, to strengthen the suppressing and repressing will, or to do both at once. It was method number two that he essayed with me. "By this method," he said, "the battle is harder, but the victory, if won at all, is decisive.

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Your will to impart miscellaneous information has been wonderfully trained, wonderfully. Perhaps we shall overcome it by training the will to keep miscellaneous information to yourself, where it belongs. Should this effort fail we'll try to bring your memory down to normal."

Well, here I am, after three months of intensive treatment, cured, healed, capable of speaking without putting everybody within sound of my voice to flight. It would be unfair to Dr. Lugweed, whom I have had the happy thought of addressing as "Master," to reveal his secret, but there is, I believe, no harm in recording fragments of his talk. "Aim high," he said one day. "I had a friend once who had taken all knowledge to be his province, and who went through life silent, for fear of talking shop. Keep him in mind." And on another occasion, in a less earnest mood, he let fall this: "Here is the paradox of social intercourse: Although the best companion is not he who says nothing, the good companion is known by what he omits to say." And on a third occasion, laconically: "Few are they who can endure the society of a well informed man." I owe much, moreover, perhaps more than I can hope to express in

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words, to a booklet called "Teach Me Rather to Forget," written by Dr. Lugweed himself. Although designed peculiarly for patients who are taking the memory-weakening course, the opening pages of this tract have a meaning for me, possibly for us all: "'That reminds me,' says my memory. 'I mustn't say it,' says my love of my neighbor. And in the end, which is not far from the beginning, my love of neighbor yields to my memory, I open my mouth and off I go."

JANUARY, 1919.

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"LE PETIT PIERRE"

REVERENCE lessens with the years, and the habit of visiting holy places loses its sway, yet it was not in youth, it was when I was well over thirty, that I found myself one autumn morning in that short street of low houses, not far from the Arc de Triomphe, which is now named the Villa Saïd and which will some day be named after Anatole France.

Look, my friend had told me, not remembering the number, look for the house with an old man's head for a knocker or doorbell, a head made of old Florentine bronze. As long as I dared I stood not far from this door, hoping M. Anatole France would come out or at least show his face at a window. He did not appear. Perhaps he did not know that a stranger before his gate was asking only one thing more to be grateful for, a glimpse of him in his own city and street. Perhaps he knew and did not care. Perhaps he was away from Paris in some Italian town, bending over a drawing or an old coin,

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lifting his head now and then to look across gardens at some line made by the hills. However this may have been, I had to take myself off at last without seeing the writer whose books have charmed, as no one else's have charmed, all the middle years of my life.

When he wrote "Le Livre de mon ami" he was, as he has told us, "nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita." Now, when he is nearer the end of that way, he gives us a third book of his childhood, "Le Petit Pierre." The thirty years between the two books have brought him friends and enmities, a clear fame through Europe and in the Americas, the promise of an immortality in which one hopes even he must believe, who believes so little. These years have not left his childhood further behind. To represent time as going by and increasing distances has never been one of his gifts. The space between the thing seen and the seer is always about the same. Le Chanteur de Kymé is as near us as Le Procurateur de Judée, Monsieur Bergeret hardly any nearer than l'Abbé Jérôme Coignard, although each is set with light certainty among the ideas, the customs, the visible world of his own present, whether ours or not.

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Not that Anatole France, who has lived for so many years at the same distance from his childhood, is unconscious of growing older. In "Le Petit Pierre," after some of the loveliest, most touching words ever written by one man of Latin genius about another, he stops and says: "Je ne veux pas mourir sans avoir écrit quelques lignes au pied de votre monument, ô Jean Racine, en temoignage de mon amour et de ma piété. Et si je n'ai pas le temps d'accomplir ce devoir sacré, que ces lignes négligées, mais sincères, me servent de testament." Has old age done anything to his genius beyond lessening the number of years in which he can give us new tokens of it? Very little. Perhaps "Le Petit Pierre" brings back no day quite "so cool, so calm, so bright" as the day when Pierre's mother, in "Le Livre de mon ami," picking him up in her arms and marking with her bodkin a rosebud on the wall of the petit salon, says to him: "Je te donne cette rose." There may be a freshness nearer daybreak on the pages of the older book, an earlier light. The new book is the richer. "Je dirai donc,"—Anatole France wrote long ago in "Le Jardin d'Epicure," "je dirai donc que, s'il n'y a pas proprement de style

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simple, il y a des styles qui paraissent simples, et que c'est précisément à ceux-là que semblent attachés la jeunesse et la durée. Il ne reste plus qu'à rechercher d'où leur vient cette apparence heureuse. Et l'on pensera sans doute qu'ils la doivent, non pas à ce qu'ils sont moins riches que les autres en éléments divers, mais bien à ce qu'ils forment un ensemble où toutes les parties sont si bien fondues qu'on ne les distingue plus." No one has given a better description of Anatole France's own prose, so like itself always in its apparent simplicity, so changing in the richness of its diverse elements. With what directness he can say, of the avaricious and prosperous landlord in "Le Petit Pierre:" "On ne lui en voulait pas d'être grand ménager de son bien, et peut-être l'en estimait-on davantage. Ce que l'on considère chez les riches, c'est leur richesse." Read the story of Uncle Hyacinthe and of the triumph in which he had himself carried, across thirty barricades in the streets of Paris, disguised as a wounded hero, safe to his mistress's house, and she a laundress. Labiche would have laughed aloud at the story. Or read the anecdote of Caire, the dog with a sense of the comic—a caricature that Mark

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Twain might have written, if he had been born long enough ago, and in Tanagra.

Conscientious critics will find in "Le Petit Pierre," have already found, no doubt, what they call Anatole France's shortcomings. But critics ought not to be conscientious. What do those conscientious Frenchmen mean who say he is impassive? I have no idea. Has any one in any age been more sensitive to the difference between ugliness and beauty, between ignobleness and generosity, between hardness and gentleness of heart? For him these three are the same difference. Nor do I know the worth of the complaint, made by M. André Gide, for example, that he can be understood as well at the first as at any later reading, that he is too readily intelligible, clear even at first sight. One might say as much of Homer's "clearness without shadow or stain, clearness divine." Of course the pleasure one takes in jewels cut and set is unlike the pleasure of hunting for them in African river-beds. The bearing of M. Gide's criticism must I suppose depend upon what one means by "understand." Anatole France has to be sure a clearness no one can miss his way in, even at first, but this clearness is not all.

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All he has, all he is—this no one can know who has not lived long in the Ile-de-France, who is not in love with its looks and its ways. A Frenchman, one who loves French literature and whose ear is nice, he and no one else can hear all the echoes in Anatole France's prose, echoes repeated in a voice subtly new, of Marot and Montaigne, so they say, of Racine and of La Fontaine, of La Bruyère and Voltaire. Even among Frenchmen such readers are not many, and fewer still must be his perfect readers, who can distinguish all the other elements his art has "si bien fondu qu'on ne les distingue plus."

When one is trying to use a writer's shortcomings so as to define his genius one must stick to his relevant shortcomings, to those that one notices while reading, as things that lessen one's pleasure. Of these Anatole France has, so far as I am concerned, exactly three. A learning which sometimes interests the writer more than the reader—there is no trace of this in "Le Petit Pierre," where I do notice, however, that Pierre at birth and Pierre at ten years old seem a little disconcertingly of the same age. Except in the case of myth, as in "Putois," Anatole France has

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always taken a more attentive interest in being than in becoming. Far away in every imaginative writer is the obscure seat of his greater inclination to things as they are or to the process by which they have become what they are, of his choice between representing the flowers of life and representing their growing. Artists who are fascinated by the way in which imperceptible changes work the changes that all may see—it is among these that we find the masters of composition, the makers of organic wholes. Few goldsmiths are designers in the large. Anatole France is not. None of his beautifully ordered books has a deeper order than that of time, a deeper unity than that of texture and tone, any unity except in its author's feeling and thought.

This is obvious enough, but do I after all feel its truth at any moment of reading? Not often. What I notice oftenest as a diminisher of my joy, as a breaker of his spell, is the frequency with which he remembers that he is a disciple of Pyrrho, who taught that all things are equally uncertain, that nothing can be known. Yes, I could wish the explicit expressions of this skepticism fewer in Anatole France, where they

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come at last to seem like self-indulgence in a habit, like compliance with a convention adopted years ago and never again looked at closely. To repeat the same gesture of doubt, even if a new grace freshens each repetition, is to do less than justice to a real intricacy in things. The difference between ignorance and learning our utmost may be as interesting as the difference between this utmost and absolute knowledge, and to be unaware of either difference is to see too few planes in the landscape life flows through. His skepticism, however, although when precipitated it tends to obliterate distinctions worth retaining, does no more when in a state of suspension than lightly to azure the atmosphere which envelops all his men and women, and in which each is free to keep his bodily and moral uniqueness. Anatole France sees them, these men and women, with caressing and negligent precision. He sees at the same instant their two motions, their common fatal drift downstream, down a river nobody knows the source of and ending or never ending in nobody knows what sea, and also the motion given to each by his private wishes. In sentences which lie more lightly on their page

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than anybody else's he passes his judgment of value upon each of his creatures and of God's. These judgments are never explicit. He lets us know them indirectly, by varying the proportion of pity to derision, of affection to mockery, in his feeling toward each of the men and women in his books. His hand has taught elegance and measure to delineate with the last sharpness, his grotesques and gargoyles even being as expressive as his loveliest landscapes of his preference for classic art; but the finest of all the instruments he works with upon human nature is this derisive sense of tears in mortal things. Never, we say at one moment, was a sense of mankind's absurdity expressed more tenderly, and never, we say again, did affection etch such comic figures. His preference among men and women is for simple and candid souls. These are sometimes learned and meditative, sometimes ignorant dwellers in bodies the laborious years have worn and twisted. Among thoughts he distrusts those that are built upon other thoughts, preferring, as likely to be more lifelike and less vain, the thoughts which memory and the senses bring, and his own profoundest thoughts come to him

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not at the end of a train of reasoning, but as immediately and easily as his simplest.

Perfect readers of Anatole France are rare, as I have said. Sometimes I wonder whether they exist, for they must have taken part in all the migrations of his soul, must have lived in all its traditions. It is a large order. He was born on an Ionian island, has looked long at reliefs on Greek temples, has listened to Attic words and to Alexandrine. He has spent a lifetime in Middle Age monasteries, has pored upon the ingenuities of theologians and the lives of the saints, understanding with friendly incredulity the thirst of those passionate hearts at rest now, which once panted after miracle and dogma. He has lingered over the violence and learning of the Renaissance, its superb and cruel joy of living, its medals and painting and smaller bronzes. He has been at home in oldest and in eighteenth-century France, although Racine is the Frenchman he loves best. In the France of yesterday he has been an exile and suddenly a soldier with a sharp sword. Never did gentleness make cleaner wounds.

It is years ago now that Anatole France looked out of his window, watched the crowds

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going along the quais that border the Seine, saw them as the posterity of the great French writers, and thought the chance slight of their appreciating these masters with justice. I have a little more faith in the men and women of the future, in the posterity of Anatole France. With imperfect understanding and a stumbling tongue one of these will say to him, upon putting down one of his books a few hundred years hence: "Your eyes saw at the same instant, and your mind often recorded in two adjectives, no further than a conjunction apart, those contradictory aspects of man which most of us can see only by making a long journey from one perception to the other. Your words keep all their beauty, your sentences are refined gold, you are wise in all times, your place in our hearts is certain; and since, having had it so long, it is impossible you should ever lose it, our debt of gratitude must rest unpaid for ever and ever."

Or if, dissatisfied with his own words, as he well may be, he looks elsewhere for better words of praise and gratitude, he will not have to look long. Anatole France has described again and again, most of all when least thinking of himself, when looking at the clear and delicate lines

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of some landscape that he loves, the impression left by his books. Which of these landscapes shall we choose, from Egypt, from Ionia, Italy or France? You remember how Thérèse, in "Le Lys Rouge," leans on the balustrade at Fiesole, breathes the spring air and looks at Florence, and you remember what is said to her: "Regardez, regardez encore, ce que vous voyez est unique au monde. Nulle part la nature n'est à ce point subtile, élégante et fine. Le dieu qui fit les collines de Florence était artiste. Oh! il était joaillier, graveur en médailles, sculpteur, fondeur en bronze et peintre; c'était un Florentin. Il n'a fait que cela au monde. Le reste est d'une main moins délicate, d'un travail moins parfait. Comment voulez-vous que cette colline violette de San Miniato, d'un relief si ferme et si pur, soit de l'auteur du Mont Blanc? Ce n'est pas possible. Ce paysage a la beauté d'une médaille ancienne et d'une peinture précieuse. Il est une parfaite et mesurée oeuvre d'art."

Anatole France has long been attached to the belief that wherever our eyes may fall we see only ourselves, and never has he seen himself in a clearer light than when, thinking only of

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Florence, he wrote these lines, although they give us no idea of the fighter that he has been, no idea of that kindly derision which is too honest to disappear at the sight of goodness, and which nothing but beauty has made him forget.

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